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Back to class

Golden girl Ellie visits pupils at her old school

See Page 4

Circus thrills

Russian circus rolls in for a spectacular show

What's On – Page 27

Deano's day

Manager of the month prize for Saddlers boss

Sport – Pages 51 & 52

HERITAGE FUNDS TO HELP CHURCH

Report by Lisa O'Brien

A FUNDRAISING committee is to be set up to pull in cash to make vital repairs at Walsall's oldest church, where thieves stripped lead off the roof more than a year ago.

English Heritage has awarded St Matthew's Church a grant of more than £128,000 for the scheme and a search is now on to find an architect. The Rev Colin Gibson said more than a dozen had already expressed an interest and a fundraising team will be set up to drive forward plans to raise the remaining £100,000 needed at the town centre church. He revealed that work could start in the autumn.

St Matthew's ward Councillor Mohammed Arif said: "I'm glad the church has found this money and in the long-term we will be working with the church to try and attract more funding for future plans. St Matthew's Church is an historic building. It's something we all need to celebrate."

Metal thieves stripped lead from the roof in 2011 leaving a repair bill running into tens of thousands of pounds. As a result, the church's £1 million restoration project was put on hold but the grant brings hope that the planned improvements can forge ahead.

Mr Gibson said: "We are inviting tenders from architects. A dozen or more are interested. The deadline is March. When they have done their report and we have finalised the plans we will be able to start the work but it also depends on raising the money.

Confidence

"There won't be any work taking place until at least the autumn. What we don't want is half a roof. We will be trying to apply for grants to make up the money.

"Now English Heritage has awarded us a grant it gives other trusts confidence that this is a good project. Otherwise, we will have to put in a lot of hard work to make up the shortfall. We are encouraging people in Walsall to help us and we will be putting together a fundraising team."

The requirements of the grant means the roof has to be replaced with stainless steel.

Further improvement work planned at the church includes repairs on crumbling plasterwork, cast-iron windows, balcony and staircase. Iimprovements are needed to flooring, replacing chairs, new toilets, kitchen facilities, refurbishment of the children's chapel, upgrading computer systems and landscaping the grounds.

It comes after a five-figure sum was spent to replace the roof of the church community centre, in St Matthew's Close, with felt following copper being stolen in December 2011, three months after £40,000 worth of lead was stolen from the main Church Hill building. The site has been a place of worship for at least 700 years.

Castings firm wins two major contracts

CASTINGS firm Majorfax is on track for record turnover this year after winning two new contracts, each worth more than £1 million.

The double contract win means the company in Charles Street, Walsall, which employs 25, will see its turnover increase from £6m to £8m in 2013.

Bosses said the new contracts would mean a "very buoyant year" for the 29-year-old business.

Majorfax, which is well known in the town for its iconic "tobacco box" chimney, has secured the two contracts from within the construction industry.

Close

Steve Cooper, managing director at the firm, said: "2013 is going to be a very buoyant year for the company.

"The two recent contract wins within the construction sector really complement our existing work."

He said he believed the contracts had been won due to Majorfax's focus on developing close working relationships with its customers.

"By ensuring that we have a firm understanding and close working relationship with our customers, all parties understand what is to be expected from the finished part," he added.

Police car on call in crash

A POLICE car on its way to a suspected robbery collided with a car in Walsall.

The smash happened on Friday in Rushall on Lichfield Road at the junction of Station Road. A police investigation has been launched.

The driver of a Kia Rio, a man aged 64, and the two officers are not thought to have been injured.

The accident happened at around 1.20pm.

West Midlands Police spokesman Peter Edney said: "At this stage it appears the police car was using lights and sirens at the time of the incident."

Empty shops figure shock

WALSALL has the second highest rate of empty shops of any large town in the country, new figures have revealed.

The number of vacant shops has increased over the past 12 months to 28 per cent.

Figures from the Local Data Company have placed Walsall second in the league table of the worst-performing large towns, trailing only to Stockport.

It comes despite a £100,000 scheme to encourage new businesses into the town with free rent and business rate relief.

In recent weeks, HMV became the latest big-name store to shut, closing the doors of its branch at Crown Wharf Shopping Park, while Jessops recently closed at the Old Square Shopping Centre.

Online

The recession, the popularity of online shopping and out-of-town retail centres have all been blamed for the number of empty shops in town centres.

Walsall Council leader Mike Bird said:"The internet is here to stay and the high street is changing. But we are confident with Primark coming in to the town, it will bring footfall to the town centre and bring new developments."

Primark is due to open as part of the multi-million pound redevelopment of the Old Square Shopping Centre, which will also see the creation of a new Co-op store.

Plan for nine-screen cinema – see Page 2

Facing up to creative fun

Curator Francesca Cox gets set for mask making workshops at the Leather Museum

CHILDREN can get creative making monster masks at a workshop at Walsall Leather Museum.

Artist Benny Semp will lead a session at the Littleton Street West venue today (Thursday) when children will be invited to create their own 'modroc monster'.

Tickets cost £1.50 for the workshops between 10.30am and 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 3.30pm. To book a place for the modroc monster craft sessions call 01922 721153.

It is one of several activities taking place during half-term at the borough's museums.

Children can put themselves in the picture by making photo frames at Walsall Museum.

Youngsters will be able to use card, felts, glitter and glue to create the funky frames at a drop-in event today to provide half-term fun for five to 12-year-olds.

It takes place in Lichfield Street from 11am to 1pm and costs 75p per child.

It is being organised by visitor assistant Kiran Muctor as part of regular activities at the museum.

"We come up with ideas for every workshop we are going to do," she said. "I thought it would be a nice one to do with Mother's Day coming up."

Council to kickstart business park plan

A MULTI-MILLION pound business park creating hundreds of jobs will go ahead now the council has vowed to step in to kickstart the scheme, after the preferred developer pulled out.

Parkhill Estates, who had been lined up to transform the James Bridge copperworks site as part of the enterprise zone in Darlaston, quit when negotiations with the Homes and Communities Agency collapsed.

Walsall Council is now stepping in to help lead the key regeneration project.

Zone

It is estimated that the enterprise zone in Darlaston will create up to 3,000 jobs.

As the main landowner for the Phoenix 10 scheme the HCA were working to finalise a deal to sell their site to developer Parkhill Estates, to carry out the reclamation and development of the land.

As part of this deal, the council would have transferred its land to the project.

Regeneration chief Councillor Adrian Andrew said the council was stepping in to ensure the development remained on track.

"It's unfortunate that Parkhill Estates and the HCA could not reach agreement but the council has acted quickly to make sure the project continues to move forward without delay, working with the HCA."

Society enjoy golden days

WALSALL'S Gilbert and Sullivan Society is celebrating its 50th anniversary.

To mark its golden milestone, the group is performing two of the duo's best loved pieces, The Pirates of Penzance and Trial by Jury – the first shows performed by the group when it started at Butts School in 1963.

They are being performed at the Forest Arts Centre from last night (Wednesday) until Saturday. Tickets cost £12 with £10 concessions. Call (01922) 452970 for tickets.

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NEWS

CONTENTS

Peter Rhodes	4
Letters	14
Memory Lane	16
Clubs	21
What's on	27
TV Listings	28-30
Property	32-41
Motoring	42-45
Classified	46-50
Sport	51-52

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Houses of Parliament launch for Trudy's charity

Trudy Shingler

A TRUST set up by the grieving parents of a former beauty queen and mother from Walsall is to be officially launched as a charity at the Houses of Parliament.

The launch, which will be attended by Health Minister Anna Soubry and Commons Speaker John Bercow, will mark the second anniversary of her death. Married mother-of-one Trudy Shingler died in February 2011, aged 35, from a brain tumour.

Around 45 family members and friends from Walsall and Cannock will make the trip to Westminster on Monday.

The event takes place at the invitation of Cannock Chase MP Aidan Burley, who is one of the patrons of Trudy's Trust, set up by Trudy's parents Mark and Sue Leeson and their family. It aims to raise awareness and £1 million for brain tumour research, as well as offering support.

Trudy's father Mr Leeson said: "Such a prestigious occasion will help us raise the profile of the charity."

Trudy was diagnosed with a brain tumour in September 2010. She endured two operations and three months of chemotherapy before her death.

The Rushall-born former Aldridge Community School pupil had won a clutch of West Midlands and national beauty queen titles, including Miss Pelsall and Miss Walsall, before concentrating on her career in the probation service. She became a forensic psychologist.

Plan is unveiled for nine-screen cinema

A NINE-SCREEN cinema complex including restaurants and bars will be built in Walsall town centre, creating up to 200 jobs, under plans submitted to Walsall Council.

The Littleton Centre would be built next to the multi-million pound Tesco store and would include a Vue Cinema. Cordwell Property Group is behind the £5 million scheme and bosses say it will be a "premier leisure destination." Shops would form part of the 45,000 sq ft development.

by Lisa O'Brien

Cinema group Vue would take on the film operation, while there would be ground floor restaurants, bars and a retail unit.

If planners give the go-ahead, work could start later this year.

Tom Wilcox, development director at Cordwell, said: "We are delighted to have secured Vue in this high-profile town centre scheme, which will add to the ongoing regeneration and provide employment opportunities for the town.

"We have been working hard with the council's regeneration team over the past six months in order to develop the cinema scheme and bring it to fruition and we are in discussions with several national restaurant brands regarding the ground-floor space.

"In terms of the number of jobs created, it's likely to be in the region of 180 to 200, as the cinema alone will be employing 65 full and part-time staff."

Opportunity

Geoff Moore, director of development and construction for Vue, said: "The state-of-the-art cinema will be designed to create the most exciting cinema-going experience in the area."

St Matthews Councillor Mohammed Arif said: "It will bring more customers into the town centre. It will attract a younger audience.

"It will give the area a shot in the arm."

It comes as plans have also been submitted to demolish buildings fronting High Street, Digbeth, and Lower Hall Lane to make way for a restaurant and 11 shops to be built, promising around 200 jobs. The £12m plan has been submitted by Norton & Proffitt Developments, as a joint venture by St Modwen and Goold Estates Ltd.

The Saddlers Centre is sold to investors

THE main shopping centre in Walsall has changed hands. The Saddlers Centre in Park Street includes Marks & Spencer and Argos.

Property investment firm Topland Group has bought the 195,886 sq ft complex from Scottish Widows Investment Partnership for an undisclosed sum.

The centre curently has 48 units let to tenants, including Boots, Subway, Bodycare, Greggs and Vision Express.

Mark Kingston, co-managing director of Topland, said: "The acquisition of the Saddlers Centre is an exciting acquisition for us and will add to our already substantial retail portfolio. We liked the yield profile and the diverse tenant mix."

Helping Evie to walk on her own

Operation hope – fundraising mum Jayne Poole with her five-year-old daughter Evie

A MOTHER has launched a fundraising campaign to help pay for a £50,000 operation for her daughter.

Five-year-old Evie Poole, from Brownhills, suffers from cerebral palsy and her mother Jayne is leading efforts to raise money for an operation in America, so Evie can walk independently.

Mrs Poole, aged 40, of Water Lily Grove, who works as an advanced nurse practitioner at North Staffordshire Hospital, said friends and family were rallying around.

A prom has been organised at Norton Canes Community Centre in August and also a sponsored skydive. Evie's school, Heath Hayes Primary, is organising events to help, incuding an Easter Egg hunt

To donate and learn more go to evies-butterfly-fund.webeden.co.uk

Three men are cleared in kidnap court case

THREE Walsall men involved in a case featuring kidnap and assault charges have been acquitted.

The alleged victim, who was 16 at the time, told Stafford Crown Court he did not wish to press charges and would not answer questions for religious reasons.

The prosecution claimed the boy, who cannot be named under an order of the judge, was bundled in to Dudu Miah's car in Watery Lane, Caldmore, last July by Shakib Miah and driven off.

It was also alleged Shakib and his brother Shahid assaulted him.

Judge

But after the youth went in to the witness box on Monday and said he would not answer questions, the prosecution offered no further evidence.

Shakib Miah, aged 20, his brother Shahid Miah, 22, both of Wednesbury Road, Caldmore, and Dudu Miah, 39, also from Walsall, were all cleared by the jury of assaulting the boy on the direction of Judge David Fletcher.

Shakib and Dudu were also acquitted of kidnap, Shakib was acquitted of robbing the boy of a mobile phone and Shahid was cleared of possessing an offensive weapon.

The four had pleaded not guilty to all charges.

Drunken thief stole camera off house wall

A DRUNKEN man stole a camera which had recorded him interfering with parked cars in Willenhall. Glen Tipton was trying to find an unlocked car to sleep in.

His actions in Pooles Lane in November were caught by CCTV at a house. He took the device but the 20-year-old had been captured on the camera's hard drive and was identified by police.

Tipton, of Crab Lane, New Invention, was sentenced to 40 hours unpaid work and ordered to pay more than £300 in compensation and costs by Walsall magistrates. He admitted theft and two charges of vehicle interference.

Mr Chris Stapleton, defending, said Tipton has learning difficulties. He had been taken out drinking but had been abandoned. "It was simply a case of trying to find a bed for the night," said Mr Stapleton.

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Problem subway to close

A VANDALISED subway which many residents are too frightened to use will be closed and replaced with a level crossing, under £150,000 council proposals.

The underpass goes under the busy Willenhall Road at Portobello. It has been a problem areas for years but the situation got worse this winter after light fittings were broken, leaving the subway in darkness at night.

Vandals have covered the walls in graffiti and have broken handrails.

A meeting was held in the Royal Oak pub to give residents an opportunity to discuss the issue with Wolverhampton South MP Pat McFadden, Police Commissioner Bob Jones and representatives of Wolverhampton City Council.

Street

During the meeting – organised by pensioner Tom Larkin – the council's Bob Willis announced the proposed closure, with a street level crossing in its place.

"The subway is a disgrace and we've looked at doing long-term sustainable repairs but it's not possible and the subway is a dead duck," said Mr Willis, service manager for transportation network management.

He added that the scheme, costing up to £150,000, would be put in the council's capital programme in April, with a completion date of May at the earliest.

Residents at the meeting wanted temporary measures to be put in place.

Sick absences a priority for Manor bosses

BOSSES at Walsall Manor Hospital have insisted that tackling sickness absence is a high priority after it emerged levels have continued to rise.

The amount spent on agency cover staff during December was £315,000 – an increase of £108,000 compared to the month before.

Sickness levels in the final month of the year were 5.12 per cent against the monthly target of 3.95 per cent, according to latest figures.

In a report to the board, Sue Wakeman, director of human resources, said: "Sickness absence will remain a high priority for the trust."

Convenience store scheme at derelict pub

FRESH plans have been lodged to transform a derelict pub in Willenhall into a supermarket in Willenhall, with the promise of 10 jobs.

The Brown Jug stands empty in Sandbeds Road but there are plans to bring it back into use as a convenience store.

The proposals include building extensions to the side and rear of the former pub and the scheme is poised to create three-full time and seven part-time jobs.

The pub has been vacant for more than a year and five months with plans stating that it has 'deteriorated considerably'. The building has previously been targeted by vandals and fly-tippers.

A previous planning application to extend the pub to provide a function room was rejected by the council on the grounds of potential nuisance to residents of Winehala Court. According to applicant Andrew Rowson, the new application is deemed to be far less intrusive on the occupants of Winehala Court.

Premises

A design and access statement, submitted with the plans to Walsall Council, reads: "The application will help to rejuvenate the area in providing a community facility available both to passer-bys and local residents.

"This will help to prevent the premises from being a target for vandalism and/or drug abuse and at the same time will help to create employment within the local area and, of course, to national suppliers."

Keith Watkins, Walsall Camra's pub preservations officer, said: "This pub has been closed for quite a long time.

"You couldn't really argue on the grounds of loss of amenity. It has been on the market for some time, so anybody who wanted to take it on has had a chance to do that. It's always sad to see a pub close but we do have to be realistic."

Yobs are using dogs to menace walkers

YOUTHS are using lurcher dogs to intimidate walkers in Walsall and both the council and police plan action to stamp it out.

Concerns have been raised about boisterous dogs being let loose at The Lea in Goscote to target other animals and wildlife. Complaints have also been made about dog fouling on the fields with the actions condemned as "deplorable" by a ward councillor.

Walsall Council and police have been informed and are now taking steps to tackle the issues around the green belt.

Councillor Pete Smith said he had been contacted about the lurcher dogs being allowed to bait domestic cats and wildlife.

"This is deplorable and I hope that such anti-social behaviour, now that the police and the council have been made aware, is stopped in its tracks and the offenders dealt with," he said. "CCTV cameras in the area should, hopefully, assist.

Message

"The message must go out that this sort of activity is unacceptable and the local community, working together, can put a stop to this."

Leisure chief councillor Anthony Harris said: "We're looking to tackle the problem with youths and dogs with assistance from Walsall police and the Friends of The Lea group.

"Our rangers have enforcement powers to tackle dog fouling and we will be carrying out some targeted patrols to help clamp down on this problem.

"Thankfully, most dog owners are responsible and will clean up but there could be a penalty of £50 per offence for those who ignore our advice.

Fall in orders is a blow for foundry firm

A BROWNHILLS based foundry and engineering group Castings has been hit by a further falls in orders.

Chairman Brian Cooke said the fall appeared to have plateaued but final results would be still be "marginally" below expectations.

In December, the firm warned of a 20 per cent drop in orders in the previous two months as customers in Europe's truck-making industry had a slowdown.

At the time it said plans for 145 jobs were put on hold.

Castings employs more than 1,000 at its Brownhills base, at Fradley Park, Lichfield, and at a second foundry in Derbyshire.

Reviewing the group's performance from October to the end of January, Mr Cooke said: "In these uncertain times it is impossible to make forecasts for next year."

Making merry with Robin Hood

Mia Rashod as Robin, Hasan Zulfqar as King Richard and Zanib Hussain as Friar Tuck in Park Hall Junior Academy's musical version of the outlaw legend

THE tale of Robin Hood has been brought to life by pupils at a Walsall school. More than 100 Year 5 pupils at Park Hall Junior Academy took part in a play about Nottingham's hero outlaw, famed for stealing from the rich to give to the poor.

They performed a musical based on the story of Robin Hood and Maid Marion, singing and dancing for fellow pupils and parents. The youngsters, all aged nine or 10, have been studying traditional tales for the past term.

Every school year, all of the classes take their turn to put on a show for the rest of the school. Year 5 pupils spent just two weeks preparing for their stage appearance, learning lines, songs and dance moves as well as making some of their own costumes.

Year group leader Nicola Turner said it had been worth all the hard work.

Traditional

"The children absolutely loved it," she said. "The whole project about traditional tales really engaged them.

"As a class they love reading anyway and they really love stories so this all inspired them very much.

"They all enjoyed doing the dancing and the singing. It was hard work putting it together in just two weeks but it's definitely all been worth it."

Miss Turner brought a script for pupils to follow and adapted it slightly to make sure everyone could take part.

NEWS in brief

Buyers look at old college campus

A FORMER Walsall College site has been put on the market – and bosses say there has already been some interest from potential buyers.

The former Shelley campus, in Scarborough Road, Alumwell, closed in 2009 when students moved into the new Wisemore campus.

College spokeswoman Sharan Shukla said today: "I can confirm we have had some interest in response to the Shelley Campus site being advertised for sale but no firm agreement has been made."

Garage still open at site for housing

IT'S business as usual at a garage in Pelsall that has been earmarked for new homes.

Housing is to be built on land currently occupied by Riddings Garage, where development of 14 homes has been given approval by Walsall Council.

The service station remains opens in the meantime as owners wait to hear back from developers Dunedin Homes, who aim to transform the site on Wolverhampton Road. The garage continues to provide fuel sales, servicing and repairs.

Screen test that could save lives

MEN in Walsall aged 65 and over can take advantage of a screening test designed to save lives.

Screening can help detect abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA), which can be fatal but is treatable. Men aged 65 and over are most at risk. Screening is done through a 10-minute ultrasound of the abdomen. Call 01384 456111.

More young people in apprenticeships

THE number of young people starting apprenticeships in Walsall has increased by almost 20 per cent. A total of 3,250 apprenticeship starts were recorded in the borough for the academic year 2011-12. This was a growth of 18.8 per cent on the year before.

Ramblers embark on riverside walk

WALSALL group of the Ramblers will be heading to Hampton Loade, near Bridgnorth, on Sunday for a seven and a half mile walk beside the River Severn. For more details call (01922) 621148.

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NEWS

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

YOU are what you eat. I had a beef pie on Tuesday and I've been a little hoarse ever since.

❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑

YES, I know there's a lot of it about. Throat full of razor blades, head full of snot and your voice suddenly dropping an octave. For men, there is one advantage of this chesty winter malady. At last we can all do a good impression of Lee Marvin's basso-profundo hit from Paint Your Wagon. All together now: I was born under a wandrin' star.

❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑

THE wrong sort of snow brought down an oak tree which in turn brought down all the phone lines in our neighbourhood. As I reported earlier, BT said on Monday it would be fixed in 48 hours. Fat chance. The engineer tells me it could have been sorted earlier but he had to wait for the man who decides whether telegraph poles are safe to climb. No surprises there, then.

❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑

TRYING to get our calls diverted was enough to make you tear your hair out. It involved the inevitable conversation with a call centre in India. When these call centres first opened I used to chat for ages with operators in Benares or Bangalore about where they were and where I was and how's the weather your end and who'd you fancy for the First Test? But over the years the fluent English speakers seem to have moved on. Call me paranoid but I suspect when I call up these days, the supervisor cups his hand over the phone and says to his team: "Rhodes on the line again. Anyone here not speak English?"

❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑

SO FAREWELL, Pope Benedict. Purely by chance we were in Italy when he became Pope in 2005. As we flipped between CNN and BBC in our hotel room, there was some confusion about events in the Vatican. Had the right colour of smoke emerged from the chimney? Had the cardinals made their decision or were they still haggling? Yet while CNN and the BBC dithered, all the church bells in Riva del Garda began ringing. Somehow, the people knew they had a new Pope and the sound of those bells echoing joyously over Lake Garda is a memory to treasure.

❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑

IN A week when we are thinking hard about the stuff we eat, my local off-licence is offering expert advice on choosing the right wines to go with your dinner menu. I am torn between Marelot and Chardonneigh.

❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑

ONE of the most depressing reports this week is the news that Britain does not have enough skilled IT technicians to make the internet secure. Because our universities are turning out the wrong sort of graduates, using the worldwide web will become increasingly risky. But while we are short of cyber experts, we are knee deep in video-technique, leisure-planning and media-studies graduates who have no jobs, no hope and £40,000 of university debt. At the heart of this imbalance of talent is the old snobbery among English academics for anything that involves using your hands or, heaven forbid, wearing a boiler suit. Wickedly misled by useless careers advisers, bright kids who could make a great living working with widgets waste three years of their lives faffing around with video cameras in the belief that they will be the next Matt Baker. Meanwhile, plumbers (if you can get one) charge £60 per hour.

❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑

AND off to the nurse for the annual blood-pressure test and analysis of my latest blood sample. Everything seems boringly normal but I suspect 20 years from now we will look back on this ritual examination of our gore in much the way that today's doctors look back on leeches, bleeding cups, black bile and miasma. Medicine never stands still. Today's wisdom is tomorrow's folklore.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Nursing home is step nearer

A 20-BEDROOM nursing home that will create new jobs in Essington is finally set to be built – 16 years after it was first proposed.

Developers hope to build the facility on land off Kitchen Lane. Initial plans were approved by council chiefs as far back as 1997 and the previous building on site was demolished.

But the nursing home project has been hit by a series of setbacks. For example, three years ago, Kean Building Services said it would not build the home unless permission was given for 40 bedrooms, saying a 20-bedroom home was not viable.

But a revised application will now go before South Staffordshire Council's planning committee in April.

It seeks to renew the previous planning consent that was given in 2004, which proposes a u-shaped, one-storey building with a central, two-storey section.

It would provide 20 bedrooms, two lounges and a dining room, plus space for 14 vehicles at the front of the building.

Farm

Essington councillor David Clifft said he would be pleased to see the site, which used to contain farm buildings, put to good use.

Councillor Clifft added: "I'm totally in favour of the proposal. The site hasn't been used for some time so there's a bit of undergrowth and it would be good to see the plans come together.

"With the elderly population growing in South Staffordshire it will also cater for people's needs in Essington and allow residents to stay in the village. I wasn't against the application but I had some highways concerns about traffic coming in and out. But I'd rather they use this land than a piece of greenbelt."

South Staffordshire Council confirmed the application, which will go before planning bosses on April 8, had been received.

Spokesman Jamie Angus said: "The developers have now submitted an application to discharge some of the previous conditions to their planning permission, which would suggest the development is set to take a step closer to reality.

"Our planners are looking at the new information and will hope to complete that process within a month."

More jobs at firm in £4m deal for depot

DELIVERY group Aspray24 is creating 30 jobs and building a £4 million warehouse after securing a finance deal.

A previously derelict 5.5 acre site on Park Road, Willenhall, will house the new 100,000 sq ft warehouse. It will be situated next door to Aspray24's current head office on Noose Lane.

The expansion of the group, aided by the funding from Lloyds Bank Commercial Banking, will see the company operating across an 18-acre site once work is completed this summer.

Fleet

Aspray24, which has 600-plus staff, is one of the UK's largest independent transport and logistics companies, handling next-day express delivery, international delivery, warehousing and logistics. The business operates a fleet of around 450 vehicles

A family-owned firm established in 1982, Aspray24 has grown to an annual turnover of more than £30 million with a UK network of 13 depots.

Stuart Laight, managing director, said: "Our business has grown considerably over recent years and we have simply grown out of our existing warehouse operation and needed to relocate to much larger, more suitable premises."

Spotlight is to stay on golden postbox

A GOLDEN postbox in honour of Aldridge swimming star Ellie Simmonds has been permanently illuminated at night.

A spotlight has been installed at the Royal Mail postbox in High Street to ensure it always shines bright.

The double Paralympic champion has become a household name and the box, repainted after her success at London 2012, has attracted visitors to the town.

Walsall Council has worked alongside its partner Amey, which carries out work on street lights around the borough, to keep the landmark lit up in the dark.

by Craig Hughes

Ellie, aged 18, said: "The golden postbox is a lovely reminder of an unforgettable year and I'm thrilled it's in my home town of Aldridge, as the support I've had from all over the borough has been amazing.

"It's great that Amey has installed a floodlight there so it can be lit up at night – that's another nice touch."

Aldridge councillor and transport chief Tom Ansell said the scheme was a simple way to pay a proper and lasting tribute to the swimming sensation.

Memory

"Many of us remember the sight of the Olympic Torch passing through the borough," he said. "It was a remarkable day that will live long in the memory.

"The whole borough was behind the Great Britain team last summer in the Olympics in London and the Paralympics but there was an even louder cheer when Ellie Simmonds competed.

"She's a smashing girl and a real credit to Walsall and the golden postbox and this light will ensure we don't forget her."

Kevin Grigg, from Amey, added: "We work to light up the whole borough of Walsall and so it seemed fitting that we should offer to help illuminate this permanent reminder of a local girl's success. "

Hope for new jobs at an old foundry site

A DEVELOPER is poised to breathe new life into a former industrial site, which has been standing empty since 2009.

It is hoped new jobs will be created when the as-yet unnamed firm moves in at the former Ductile Wesson site in Bull Lane, Moxley. Around 150 people lost jobs almost four years ago when the foundry shut down, ending 200 years of history.

An application is being drawn up for future use of the site, believed to be industrial.

Back to class for Ellie

Ellie Simmonds meets pupils at her old school in Aldridge

PARALYMPIC swimming star Ellie Simmonds was the guest of honour when she revisited her old school in Aldridge to meet pupils.

She took part in two special assemblies at Aldridge School and chatted to pupils who had taken part in a reading challenge to raise cash for charity.

Year 7 and 8 students raised £1,868 in the sponsored readathon, which will go to the CLIC Sargent charity for young cancer patients and The Roald Dahl Foundation. Part of their reward was to meet Paralympian Ellie, aged 18.

She was a pupil at the Tynings Lane school from 2006 to 2007 before moving to be nearer her coaching base in Swansea.

She talked to students about her fantastic Olympics experience in both Beijing in 2008 and at London 2012. She received the MBE from the Queen, at aged 14.

The pupils also had the chance to grill her about being a teenager in the limelight.

"It is always great going to schools and inspiring students to achieve but it was especially good coming back to my old school," said Ellie, who bagged two golds, a silver and a bronze at the Paralympics 2012.

Work under way on kerb safety plan

KERBSIDE pedestrian detectors are being installed in Caldmore Green as part of a £500,000 road safety improvement plan.

The detectors will be used to alert traffic lights to pedestrians who are waiting to cross the road. They will also be used to stop delays caused by red lights when pedestrians have already crossed.

Under the second phase of work, which is now under way, the road will be closed at its junction with West Bromwich Street. The first phase has already seen work carried out near Spout Lane.

Businesses along Caldmore Green will remain open as usual, while access will be maintained. The improvements follow calls to boost safety after a series of accidents in Caldmore.

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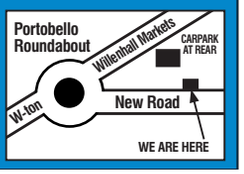

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Grenade concern emptied streets

HUNDREDS of residents were kept out of their homes for more than five hours and pupils sent home from school after a hand grenade being used as a pencil case sparked a bomb scare in Darlaston.

The Army's bomb disposal team were called in after police found the grenade during a drugs raid on a house in Addenbrooke Street on Tuesday of last week.

Fifteen cannabis plants were found inside one of the upstairs rooms and a 53-year-old man and 54-year-old woman were arrested on suspicion of drugs cultivation. They were later bailed pending further inquiries.

Alerted

The incident unfolded after police carried out the raid at 8.15am.

Residents were alerted by officers going door-to-door, roads sealed off and the sick and elderly were ferried from their properties in police vans.

At Bentley Leisure Pavilion, an emergency rest centre was set up. Many took refuge at the homes of friends and family.

Buses were diverted along other routes and staff and children from St Joseph's Primary moved to Rough Hay Primary where parents were told to pick them up.

Army bomb disposal experts found the grenade to be de-commissioned and posed no danger. It was being used to store pencils.

MP fears council gives recycling a bad image

A WALSALL MP has called for a halt to Walsall Council's zero-tolerance crackdown on recyling as the campaign against the tough bin policy gathers pace.

More than 26,000 bins went uncollected in the borough due to wrong rubbish being put in specific bins at the end of last year and into the new year, leaving streets littered with rubbish. Then residents cried foul over apparent double-standards when binmen were seen mixing waste in the same trucks instead of separating them.

The council said the action was taken to speed up collection of a big bin backlog after the wagons had been unable to make collections during the snow and icy weather.

Walsall Council has been sending out 'Binspectors' to enforce the policy which, together with advertising costs, has racked up a bill of £13,316.

This includes the purchase of stickers, leaflets and part-time agency staff. This amount excludes some staff costs, travelling expenses and permanent staff time spent on the initiative.

Proportion

Now Walsall South MP Valerie Vaz has entered the fray, saying she fears the policy risks "turning away residents from recycling".

She explained: "The cost and the negative impact of the zero-tolerance policy on residents are completely out of proportion."

Councillor Tom Ansell, the council's transport and environment boss, said: "We were scheduled to collect over 700,000 green bins so the 26,892 which were not collected equates to less than one in 20 of the total bins collected.

"We have invested money into the campaign by employing short-term staff to educate residents on how to recycle correctly. It has cost the council considerably less than what it would have been charged for contamination costs."

The council claim that the policy is necessary and that the money spent so far is a good investment when compared with the £100 per tonne that it costs to deal with rejected contaminated waste.

Fears – Valerie Vaz MP

Work starts on new centre despite theft

WORK has started on the long-awaited replacement for a community centre used by many Walsall youngsters.

Builders are on site to pull down the existing 35-year-old Green Rivers Community Centre, Blakenall, and create a £170,000 replacement. It is hoped the facility will be up and running at the end of April to offer activities for youngsters.

But the project was dealt a blow just before work started as thieves raided the building, off Green Rock Lane, and stole items containing metal. It left the group without tables and chairs.

Despite this, leaders welcomed the start of the work and said they were looking forward to settling in to their new base.

Caroline Crolley, project worker and trustee at Green Rivers, said: "Builders have moved on site. We're so thrilled to see it getting under way now.

"We think we will be in by around the end of April but when we do move in we will have to launch an appeal for donations of chairs and tables."

Flooded

Miss Crolley said metal thieves had not only raided the building but also flooded it.

"Anything with a bit of metal on it was taken," she said. "It really does make you despair at times."

The centre was involved in a two-year wrangle with Walsall Council to stay at its site in Green Rock Lane. It had faced an uncertain future amid the threat of eviction but an agreement was eventually reached and the group was granted a 21-year lease in 2011.

Despite the closure, the group will still be taking a group of 25 young people on a half-term holiday.

Homes to replace a scrapyard

PLANNING bosses also approved a scheme to transform a scrap metal yard into 39 homes.

The Monmore Recycling site in Noose Lane will be cleared to make way for nine two-bedroom, 26 three-bedroom and four four-bedroom homes.

The business is transferring operations to its Wolverhampton site to make way for the residential scheme.

Seven letters of support were submitted to Walsall Council, claiming the residential development would provide much-needed homes in the area, improve the view and halt nuisance noise.

After the meeting, Councillor Carl Creaney, for Willenhall South, said: "We do need more housing in the area and this is also a scrap yard which has sometimes generated complaints in a residential area."

Shops revamp is progressing

WORK on the multi-million pound transformation of Walsall's Old Square shopping Centre can begin sooner than planned after revised proposals were passed.

Under the latest plans submitted by developer Zurich Ltd, a set of proposed offices above the long awaited Co-op supermarket will be dropped.

The £21 million revamp of the Bridge Street shopping precinct is part of the first stage of plans and will see the creation of a Primark and Co-op, creating upwards of 150 new jobs.

This coincides with NCP's agreement to rebrand a prominent multi-storey car park in Freer Street as the Old Square car park.

Trainer Paul is on a mission

Paul Wilson with students Abby Dudley, Jessica Vaughan, Robbie Innes, Oriann Randall and Jessica Wainwright

A PERSONAL trainer who has featured as an expert on TV's Embarrassing Bodies has advised college students on their diets.

Paul Wilson, who runs Fat Burner Boot Camp at Aldridge Airport, gave a seminar on nutrition at Walsall College. It is the latest in a series of talks he has given on diet and fitness.

On Embarrassing Bodies he conducted an experiment on whether larger people sweat more than average-sized people. He put the two groups through their paces at Aldridge before their perspiration levels were measured.

The 25-year-old, of Broadway, Walsall, also appeared on a BBC programme about obesity last year.

He said: "The West Midlands is the worst place in Europe for obesity, with around 30 per cent of the population obese. It's my mission to get the people of Walsall healthier. "

Mr Wilson spoke to around 40 students at Walsall College.

He said that the key to losing weight was not just keeping up with exercise and sensible nutrition. In addition to workouts and diet, he holds seminars on preventing cravings and eating due to emotional needs.

NEWS in brief

Schools win praise for improvements

A SCHOOL in Walsall has been sent a letter of praise from Westminster for improvements in key stage two test results.

Minister of state for schools, David Laws, has written to the headteacher of Little Bloxwich Cof E Primary School to congratulate staff and pupils.

The school is one of the top 100 performing schools in the country based on consistent improvement in key stage two tests.

Watling Street Primary in Brownhills, Lindens Primary in Streetly, and Jubilee Academy in Mossley have also been recognised by the Department for Education for achieving 100 per cent in three key measures at key stage three.

A bright future in the LED business

BUSINESS is booming at an electronics firm in Aldridge, which is about to increase production by almost 50 per cent, thanks to a £225,000 investment.

The cash will be spent on new machinery at Mackwell Electronics, which employs more than 150 people.

Bosses said the LED product business was doing well in a competitive market.

Theme and date at village carnival

THE date and theme for this year's Great Wyrley Carnival have been set by organisers.

The annual event, which is in its 36th year, will be held on June 29 and the theme will be Music Through the Decades.

Great Wyrley Carnival Committee has arranged for the procession to begin at midday from the Star Field in the town.

Thieves in raid for haul of zinc bars

ZINC worth £50,000 was stolen after a trailer was taken from an industrial estate in Bentley. Thieves broke in to a secure compound in Bentley Road South on January 30. Just over a week later the trailer was found inTipton minus 27 tons of zinc bars

Clean-up project at woodland park

MORE than 30 bags of rubbish were collected during a clean-up at Rough Wood Country Park last weekend, organised through the Friends group. Bat boxes are also being put up later this month.

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NEWS

Long-distance runner braves rain and snow

Darren Chandler, who ran 190 miles for Wateraid, congratulated by wife, Natalie, with children Lennon and Ophelia

IT TOOK him 11 days and he had to battle through biting winds, heavy rain and snow. But it was worth it for father-of-two Darren Chandler who completed a 190-mile run back to Walsall from his new home in Devon.

He was greeted by friends and family in Walsall Wood at the finish line. The 25-year-old, who grew up in Brownhills, completed the challenge in aid of the charity Wateraid.

He set off from his home near Crediton on January 30 and arrived at the Walsall Wood home of his grandfather, Harold, 10 days later.

Mr Chandler, who works as a chef, said: "I decided to do this about three months ago. I saw a Wateraid advert on TV and it really got to me.

"From then on I knew I wanted to do something to help but it was Eddie Izzard who got me in to the idea of running after his 30 marathons in a year.

"I have never been a keen runner but it's something I wanted to do. I gave up smoking last year as well and wanted to get fit."

Sore

He signed up at the gym three months ago and had a personal trainer to help him.

Mr Chandler said: "I stuck to the A38 all the way up to the Midlands. It was mainly on footpaths.

"The journey up to Bristol was fine, but it was really cold when I got to Gloucester. My ankle seized up at that point and it was really sore. I had to take painkillers.

He stayed with family members and in hotels on the way.

The public donated money. He has so far raised more than £1,400 that will go towards the construction of safe water resources in Third World countries.

Darren said: "It's been really hard and challenging experience but it's been worth it."

In the past Darren has organised charity concerts near his home in Devon raising thousands of poundsfor other charities. Mr Chandler moved to Devon in 2006 with his wife Natalie. She was at Walsall Wood to meet him with children Lennon and Ophelia.

To donate go to www.justgiving.com/Darren-Chandler

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Benelux boom for Twente Express fleet

Trevor Paul, managing director of Twente Express

BROWNHILLS-BASED logistics company Twente Express has announced major expansion plans with a £500,000 investment in its truck and trailer fleet thanks to booming business on the continent.

Following a successful 2012, where revenues increased by 16 per cent, the company has made the investment in double decker mega-trailers and low-ride tractors units in order to keep up with increasing demand on their daily express freight services to and from Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg.

Twente Express managing director Trevor Paul said: "After significant growth for us in 2012, the aim is for us to continue that trend even further. We are positive that 2013 will see further growth in our export revenues and the £500,000 investment puts us in good stead to achieve this."

The company operates daily express overnight freight services to and from Holland and Belgium, with much of its new business coming from Midlands-based manufacturers exporting into the the Benelux markets.

Security is always a priority when transporting goods and for this reason solid box trailers have been chosen as opposed to curtain siders and all trailers have been fitted with the latest GPS tracking technology that incorporates computerised rear door locking mechanisms.

Water mains roadworks

MOTORISTS can expect delays in Walsall while a water main renewal scheme is carried out.

Temporary traffic lights will operate in Leamore Lane, at its junction with Bloxwich Lane, until Sunday.

Gallagher Ltd is carrying out the work on behalf of South Staffordshire Water.

Olympic spark ensures that cricket club's future secured

A CRICKET club that has coached sporting talent for more than 60 years has received almost £40,000 to secure its future.

The Bronze Cricket Club, on the border of Walsall and Sandwell, has received the much-needed cash from Olympic legacy funding.

For the last 30 years it has relied on the use of a 1960s diesel generator for lighting in the clubhouse and the cash will help provide mains electricity for lighting and heating.

The club in Chapel Lane has seen budding sportsman such as Walsall FC players Adam and James Chambers and Mal Benning try their hand with bat and ball.

Bronze CC's funding of £38,239 has helped make it secure for the foreseeable future. The money has come from Sport England's Inspired Facilities Fund.

by Craig Hughes

Magic

It is part of the £135 million Places People Play legacy that is bringing the magic of a home Olympic and Paralympic Games to communities.

Club chairman Bert Chambers, who has been associated with Bronze for more than 40 years, said: "This is a dream come true. The club has struggled to grow due to the lack of proper lighting and heating. This award will ensure Bronze CC can grow during the 21st century to become one of the town major cricket providers".

Walsall South MP, Valerie Vaz added: "For more than 60 years, Bronze Cricket Club has provided a place for Walsall residents to play cricket. In particular it has worked hard to promote cricket amongst young people in Walsall and to develop new cricketing talent."

Sport England chairman Richard Lewis said: "This National Lottery investment will create a lasting sporting legacy for Walsall.

Meanwhile, Walsall Cricket Club is hoping to boost junior membership with plans to create bigger and better changing rooms at its site in Gorway Road.

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DAY 1 - WED 27TH FEB (CONT)

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Bid to transform pub into a store

A LANDMARK pub in Willenhall will close in May and reopen as a convenience store, under plans submitted to Walsall Council.

Pub chain Marston's has applied to transform The British Oak in Lane Head into a shop. Alterations would be made at the High Road pub, including an extension at the rear, while the car park would be realigned to provide spaces for 19 vehicles.

A spokesman for Marston's confirmed that, if the planning request is granted, the pub would close in May. But he remained tight-lipped over who would occupy the store.

Walsall CAMRA said it was regrettable to see another pub closing but added that people had to "face reality".

The application is with Walsall Council's planning department.

Money worries led to employee swindling firm out of £2,000 by juggling payments

DEBT-RIDDEN Carol Edwards swindled her Willenhall employer out of more than £2,000 in a bid to ease her money worries.

Mr Howard Searle, prosecuting at Wolverhampton Crown Court, said 57-year-old Edwards dealt with payments made to the company, Wedge Group Galvanising, from commercial firms and would be responsible for filling in paying-in books and logging information on a computer system.

The court heard that she would pocket the money paid from one firm and used money paid from another company to cover the bill from the first. She moved cash around to make it look like payments had been settled and falsified records.

Mr Searle said there were 10 separate thefts over a period of almost three years where £2,173.60 was stolen. It came to light when she was away from the office and a customer asked why a stop had been put on their account when payments were up to date.

Fraud

When checks were made, the fraud started to unravel. The court heard that Edwards resigned from her job when she was challenged but initially denied any dishonesty.

Edwards, of Westfield Road, Willenhall, initially denied fraud between 2008 and 2011 but later admitted the charge.

She had worked for the company for around 16 years, starting as a cleaner

Mr Nayan Patel, mitigating, said Edwards, who had been married for 30 years, was ashamed of her actions. She had been going through a difficult period with financial issues and her husband was drinking heavily.

Recorder Stuart Sprawson said initially denying the fraud had prompted the firm to carry out a time-consuming investigation and threw suspicions onto other employees.

Edwards was last week handed an eight-month prison sentence, suspended for two years with a supervision requirement for 12 months. She was given a two-month curfew between the hours of 9pm and 7am.

Carol Edwards

Police in yard raids

SUSPECTED stolen cable was recovered when police carried out a series of scrap yard raids across the Black Country.

A total of 20 premises in Wolverhampton, Walsall, Sandwell and Dudley were visited as part of the force's crackdown on metal theft.

At a yard in Oxford Street, Bilston, officers recovered cable suspected of being stolen from phone company BT and power provider E.on.

A 44-year-old man was arrested and bailed pending further inquiries.

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NEWS

Pair convicted of lead raid on brewery's roof

LEAD was stripped from the roof of an historic brewery and carried away in a wheelie bin by thieves, a court heard.

Up to 20ft of lead flashing was stolen from Walsall's Highgate Brewery, with beer bottles also taken.

Aaron Baker and Amanda Perks denied burglary at the Grade II-listed site in Sandymount Road last summer but were last week convicted following a day-long trial at Walsall Magistrates Court.

by Craig Hughes

The court heard Baker, aged 23, had been inside the compound of the site and was passing lead underneath the gate. It was being received by 31-year-old Perks, who was the lookout, and then put into a wheelie bin. Witness Alyson Hughes told the hearing that she heard the sound of a moving bin at around 8.30pm on August 29 last year.

When staff were called to the site it appeared a roller shutter had been opened from the inside and a pack of beers taken.

Pallets had been stacked up to help with climbing the roof.

Police officers attended the scene soon after the burglary and Baker and Perks were seen standing outside her address in nearby Lysways Street. The bin had been left further up the road but a bag containing beer believed to have come from the brewery was recovered near the property.

Baker was identified by officers on CCTV at the brewery and also in an identification parade by witnesses. Baker told the court it was a case of "mistaken identity" as he had a drinking problem and was so drunk that day he kept falling over.

He claimed he had been staying with Perks and said the only time he went out on the night was to get cigarettes.

Baker claimed he bumped into someone he only knew as 'Ricky' on his way back to Lysways Street from getting the cigarettes and exchanged some of them and cash for the beer.

Strength

Perks said she had been at home watching TV at the time of the incident and insisted she would not have the strength to pull a wheelie bin full of lead.

District Judge Lesley Mottram said it was "unquestionable" that the pair were those seen by the witnesses.

She said: "This is a listed building that has had the damage caused to it and the flashing taken from it."

Sentencing of both Baker, now of Hogarth Close, Willenhall, and Perks was adjourned to be held this week after the completion of reports.

Sasha's got to dance

Ballet good – Sasha Woodward, 13, from Willenhall

BALLET dancer Sasha Woodward from Willenhall has danced her way to the final 150 contestants on TV talent show Got To Dance.

The 13-year-old performed in front of judges JLS heartthrob Aston Merrygold, Diversity's Ashley Banjo and Kimberly Wyatt. The St Thomas More pupil, of Croxley Gardens, trained at Dance Xtreme Midlands Academy and is a previous West Midlands Junior Ballet champion.

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NEWS

From Midlands to Middle Earth for former officer

Ex-Walsall police officer Mark Atkin

Double – Richard Armitage as heroic dwarf Thorin Oakenshield

A FORMER Walsall policeman is walking tall after copping a star role as a stunt double for a dwarf character in blockbuster fantasy movie The Hobbit.

Mark Atkin – who is 5ft 4in – used his height to his advantage by landing a part in the smash-hit adventure by Oscar-winning Lord of the Rings director Peter Jackson.

Mark, aged 38, who was brought up in Cannock, took an unusual career turn when he moved to New Zealand to work as a police officer, and ended up working on the film set of the new trilogy set in JRR Tolkien's Middle Earth as a double for one of the lead characters.

Mark started his police career with West Midlands Police in 1996, based in Walsall and also worked for Hertfordshire Constabulary, before moving to London's Metropolitan Police in 2004. It was 2008 when he moved to the other side of the world – to join the police force in Wellington, New Zealand.

But his future took a different turn when a friend suggested going for the open movie audition.

"My friend had spotted it and told me to go for it – and I thought he was just making a joke about my height again."

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NEWS FEATURE

Pace so fast and furious in the sport of dodgeball

The dynamic game of dodgeball is becoming popular. **Tom Mason** learns about ducking and diving from a recently-formed team

LOVERS of a unique sport are travelling far and wide across the Black Country to get their fix of a game that lasts only four minutes – dodgeball.

Made famous in this country by Ben Stiller's film of the same name, dodgeball is a fast paced game that requires brain as well as brawn as balls fly back and forth down the pitch, hitting players, bouncing off walls and occasionally being carefully dodged.

With the words of the film's anti-hero Patches O'Houlihan, "Dodge, duck, dip, dive and dodge" ringing heavy in my ears, I entered a practice session with the Walsall Warriors, one of the first teams in the Black Country's, to find out about the sport.

Dodge that - members of the recently-formed Walsall Warriors dodgeball team gang up on the club's founder Glyn Maston during a training session

Skilful

The basic rules are simple, two teams of six players must fight for control of three balls, if you are hit by a ball before it bounces you are out and if your ball is caught by the opposition you are out and one of their players is allowed back in.

Games are fast and furious, with each only taking four minutes.

The Warriors are one of eight teams in the newly-formed Cannock League of the Midlands Dodgeball League. Matched take place weekly, with two teams playing each other over the best of 10 games.

Adam Cooke, aged 18, travels more than seven miles from Tipton to Walsall to play the game he loves, he said: "The reason I like it is that it's more skilful than football and far less competitive.

"With most other sport it's difficult to get to the top but with dodgeball it's far easier to reach the top of the game."

The Warriors were set up three months ago by 50-year-old Glynn Marston, from Walsall, a man known more for his long distance runs than his love of dodgeball.

After retiring from running seven years ago due to a knee injury he grew tired of doing nothing.

He said: "We have had a lot of interest but some people still see it as an aggressive game.

"I want the club to be part of the community as it's a good sport for youngsters to get involved in, it helps get rid of a lot of frustration and energy."

Chelsie Guy, 16, from Willenhall was one of the first players to join, she said: "It's a really good way of getting fit and is a brilliant way of getting you out of the house I really enjoy playing the game."

The club hopes to start a second club, Walsall Wallabies, for younger players and is also seeking sponsors from local firms to help them buy their first official red and black kit.

If you would like to take part, the club meets every Monday from 7.15pm to 9.15pm at Willenhall Chart Centre Gomer Street, Willenhall,

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Confidential nurse-led telephone helpline available 24hrs, every day of the year. The service includes:

- experienced nurses who can recommend the best course of action if you are anxious about ill health
- health information advisers who have details on a wide range of topics including the opening hours of local pharmacies and GP surgeries and how to get treatment for toothache
- if necessary your call will be passed automatically to the 999 services
- language Line - a confidential telephone interpreting service

Calls to NHS Direct are charged at local rates and for patients' safety all calls are recorded.

NHS Direct: 0845 46 47
textphone: 0845 606 46 47

NHS Online

You can also get health information on the internet by visiting NHS Direct Online at www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Minor illness or injury

Contact your GP

For most medical problems phone your GP practice for advice or to make an appointment. You should expect to see a GP within 48 hours.

GPs visit patients at home only if they decide there is a medical need. If your surgery is closed and you need urgent advice or treatment call NHS Direct or the GP out-of-hours service.

Walk in Centres

The Walsall walk-in centre for minor illnesses and injuries that do not need hospital treatment is at:

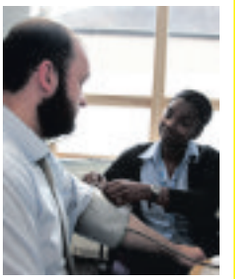
- Walsall walk-in Health Centre, Market Square, Digbeth, Walsall WS1 1QZ. Open 8am - 8pm seven days a week, **including the Christmas period.** Telephone 01922 605730.

No appointment necessary, Babies under the age of 12 months must be seen by their own GP.

Emergency and Urgent Care Centre (EUCC)

The 24/7 EUCC service is based at the Manor Hospital, near to A&E. This service will see, treat and advise patients who arrive at A&E with conditions suitable to be seen by a GP or nurse.

No appointment is necessary.



GP out of hours service

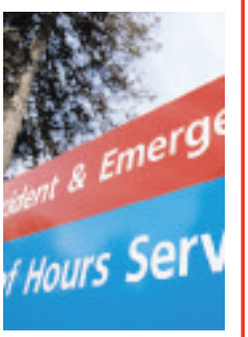
If you need help outside normal hours, phone your GP and follow the recorded advice or ring 0300 555 0306.

Walsall's service is for medical problems too urgent to wait until your own GP practice is next open.

You will be given advice over the phone and if necessary arrangements will be made for you to be seen. An appointment may be arranged for you to attend the EUCC.

Serious injury, sudden severe illness or medical emergency

Go to your nearest hospital A&E department



A&E

Only go to a hospital A&E department in the event of an accident or emergency.

An emergency is a critical or life-threatening situation such as:

- unconsciousness
- suspected broken bones
- heavy blood loss
- suspected heart attack
- deep wounds - such as a stab wound
- breathing difficulties
- chest pain
- head injuries

If you are unsure whether a health problem is an emergency needing A&E treatment then call your GP or NHS Direct for advice.

Call 999 for the ambulance service

999 ambulance

Call 999 for an ambulance if the patient:

- has had chest pains for more than 15 minutes
- is not breathing/is having difficulty breathing/is choking
- is unconscious
- is bleeding heavily
- is in severe abdominal pain
- bleeding from the vagina and could be pregnant
- is in the final stages of labour
- may have had a stroke, fit or convulsion
- may have taken an overdose
- has severe burns
- has suspected head or spinal injuries
- has had a severe allergic reaction

Further instructions will be given over the phone by a specially trained call taker and, if appropriate, an ambulance will be sent.

NEWS

Boost in store for village playgroup

Heather Norman from Sainsbury's, right, hands over the cheque to Linda Harrington and playgroup children

A PLAYGROUP has been given a cash boost by a Cannock supermarket.

The Sainsbury's store on Orbital Retail Park handed over £150 to Landywood Playgroup, in Great Wyrley. The cash will be put towards the cost of table top toys.

The money came from the supermarket company's Community Grant scheme, which is funded by sales of 'bags for life'.

Store manager Mark Pickerill said: "Our store is at the heart of the local community and it is important that we do as much as we can to support it. When we heard about Landywood Playgroup, we were really pleased to be able to help out."

Last year, the Community Grants scheme provided £135,000 worth of donations, nominated by depot and store managers and colleagues from stores nationwide.

Barcode swop leads to court

A MOTHER who swapped reduced price barcodes – conning a supermarket out of more than £100 – has been given a 12-month community order.

by Shaun Jepson

Jayde Wilson removed the 99p stickers from bread that was nearing the end of its shelf life and stuck them to three prinkter cartridges worth between £30 and £36.

She paid for the items using a self-service scanner and then walked out of Morrisons in Bilston.

However, the 20-year-old, of Cemetery Road, Willenhall, was caught moments later by security staff. The difference in price was £103.

At Wolverhampton Magistrates Court last week, District Judge Michael Morris ordered her to be under the supervision of the probation service for 12 months.

She was also told to pay £145 in fines and costs.

A previous hearing heard how Wilson, who has a two-year-old daughter, had racked up £8,000 of debt in recent years.

She was suffering from severe depression and Asperger's Syndrome, the court was told.

Wilson admitted fraud by false representation. She had previously denied the charge but changed her plea before the trial started.

Popular former dentist dies, 78

A POPULAR dentist, rugby club captain and former golf club president has died at the age of 78.

Tributes have been paid to Ian Granville Creed, who was a partner at a dentist surgery in Willenhall for 30 years and captain at Wolverhampton Rugby Club.

He died at home in Tettenhall after a two year battle with leukaemiae.

His wife Kay said: "He was a fantastic man and I never heard anybody say a bad word about him."

Mr Creed worked at New Cross Hospitalbefore establishing his own surgery, Sadler and Creed.

He had captained the Staffordshire County Rugby XV and was a former president of South Staffordshire Golf Club.

Popular – Ian Creed

Mr Creed leaves behind two children, Adrian and Tom, and step-children Nicola and Richard. A celebration of his life takes place at St Michael and All Angels Church, Tettenhall, today (Thursday) at 2.30pm.

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LETTERS

Act together to stop the bullies

BULLYING is nasty, rotten, underhand, humiliating behaviour. At a low level it can make you feel bad about yourself, have an impact on your confidence and makes you suspicious of other people. At worst, it undermines a person's trusting relationships with others, a person may feel they have no worth or value, that no one likes them, they feel defenceless. They may kill themselves.

This is the tragic result of bullying behaviour whether meted out by pupils at a school, or by work colleagues, even by loud-mouthed empty-headed elected politicians.

This vile behaviour has devastated too many young peoples lives and brought heart rending loss to families.

How can we allow children to tortur a child in a classtom, playground, ot over electronic communications?

Please take a long hard look at what you can do to stand up against bullying behaviour, we all have a role to play. Please look at redballoonlearner.co.uk which is helping young people recover from bullying.

We all need a safe environment, clear boundaries for behaviour, individual networks of support and friendship to feel valued. People need confidence to cope academically, at work and socially. The tragic loss of gifted, lively, precious young people is a terrible cost for our entire community.

Do not let the bullys win. Remember Hitler and his fascists were bullys. People joined together to beat them

If you need support shout long and loud – let's beat the bullys!

COUNCILLOR DOUG JAMES
Horton Street
Walsall

Cruelty beyond belief

THE cruelty and inhuman treatment meted out to patients at Stafford Hospital beggars belief. The same excuses are trundled out each time we have a case of ill-treatment of our vulnerable members of society by the very people who are employed to 'care'.

There are many dedicated and caring people working in the Health Service and the job is challenging but the findings into Stafford Hospital reveal yet again we have nurses, doctors and management who seem to lack basic human decency. How can anybody, let alone those in the position of looking after our sick, ignore cries for help and walk by as patients die?

Robert Francis QC in his report highlights "the appalling and unnecessary suffering" between 2005 and 2008 that led to many deaths.

This is not a one-off incident, this is a culture over many years involving staff at all levels. It is a national disgrace and those who took part in the negligence, or who kept silent and watched it happen, should be prohibited from ever working with the sick again.

I wouldn't be able to sleep at night until I had exposed the failings which had gone on for years and must have been witnessed by many.

Just imagine what the outcry would be if this appalling lack of care was happening to our prison population. If only one prisoner died due to neglect there would be immediate action and people would be disciplined. Yet our sick are treated so appalling with nobody as yet held responsible.

MRS READER
Walsall

LETTERS to the Editor

POST
Walsall Chronicle, Chronicle Editorial, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton WV1 1ES

E-MAIL
walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number of the writer. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Ring and ride is not what it was

MY mind is in a quandary. This Ring and Ride move to Wednesbury from Bloxwich is a headache for drivers and passengers.

They are the best comedians we have, those who started this upset. The first one to throw the stone into the pond was in Parliament: "we need some money". Just think of all the ripples that has caused. The next comedian, the head of Centro, says: "we need money". Ring and Ride is the answer, so we pay 60p a journey. That is alright. We know there were a lot of moaners but you get those no matter what.

Then, the next thing is, hundreds were spent on sat-navs in every Ring and Ride. They proved useless.

Then hundreds were spent on a similar, twice-as-big machine telling them the way to go (up the wall by now), if the driver took any notice of it.

We cannot get out at night like we used to. I've just rung in to go to the Mecca on Friday night but they cannot take me because of the change that's taking place. I asked to be taken to the Gala at Walsall from 5pm to 9pm. I was told there was no bus in the Brownhills area.

I am 94 and I like to get out at night as much as I can, so I put my trust in the Ring and Ride and bingo. There is nowhere else, only my weekly whist drive.

MARY WOOTTON
Poxon Road,
Walsall

It seems that transport bosses are not listening

RE The letter about Ring and Ride service, February 7. I agree about Centro and the service they give from Walsall area. Somebody must have a grievance with the Walsall people, would this happen in Birmingham ?

Centro, it would seem, do not consult their customers or staff, they just do what they like. We all know things look OK on paper at the planning stage but things are often different in reality.

The drivers and office staff at Walsall are great but are now very unhappy. But it seems like Centro do not listen to their grievances or those of their customers.

How can drivers get back to Wednesfield from dropping people of late at night and finish before 11pm?

These people will also be old one day and there will no longer be a ring and ride service for them to use

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NEWS

Football yobs banned from Wolves matches

Mckenzie Smith, aged 19

20-year-old Chad Betteley

Shaun Jones, aged 22

Ward Morgan, aged 24

FOUR football thugs have been banned from Wolves matches.

After Wolves' game against Derby County at Molineux last August, the four men threatened away supporters who were walking to Wolverhampton Railway Station.

Wolverhampton Magistrates' Court heard how one of the offenders – Shaun Jones – was seen to run into a group of Derby fans before punching one in the face.

The men, who continued to shout abuse and tried to provoke the Derby fans, were recognised by police, arrested and later charged with affray.

Wolverhampton residents Ward Morgan, aged 24, of Goldthorn Hill, and 22-year-old Jones, of Park Lane, Fallings Park, pleaded guilty to threatening and intimidating behaviour. Mckenzie Smith, aged 19, of Sand Bank in Bloxwich, and Chad Betteley, 20, of Temple Row, Willenhall, faced the same charges and pleaded guilty.

Spotters

Morgan and Jones were banned from football matches for four years. Smith and Betteley each received a 12-month banning order as they already had football bans imposed in December for other matters.

Sergeant Donna Jones, from West Midlands Police's Football unit, said the group was well known to police football spotters for intimidating behaviour.

She added: "This pattern of behaviour, intended to goad other fans into participating in football violence, is not acceptable and we will look to pursue these offenders in court at every opportunity.

"This is not the behaviour of the vast majority of true Wolves supporters who I am sure will be pleased to hear of this outcome."

The banning orders mean that the men will not be able to enter any town or city where Wolves are playing three hours before kick-off, during the match and for three hours after the final whistle.

Morgan, Jones and Smith will also have to attend the Think Smart programme.

Victims urged to report loan sharks

PEOPLE in Walsall who have been victims of loan sharks are being urged to come forward.

A nationwide appeal has been launched for people who are living in fear of lenders who use threats, violence and other extreme methods to force people to pay back money.

Officers at Walsall Council Trading Standards are encouraging anyone who has been a victim of loan sharks, or knows someone who has, to speak out.

Councillor Zahid Ali, public protection boss at Walsall Council, said: "These criminals make their victims feel very intimidated, meaning they may be frightened to come forward and report it. But we would ask people to please help us to catch the loan sharks. There is lots of support out there for victims of this crime so they do not have to suffer in silence."

Victims can call a confidential helpline on 0300 555 2222.

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MEMORY LANE

Securicor guards Harry Pritchard and Jack Ward take possession of electric powered mopeds

Walter Edge on his 1928 Sunbeam

Peter Bidmead passes on his knowledge to youngsters an RAC/ACU motorcycle course

Testament to the two-wheelers

by Toby Neal

Don Higham sets off for work on his 1925 Royal Enfield in September 1976

PETER Bidmead reckoned he was born with two stroke motorcycle fuel in his blood.

Not only had he a collection of vintage motor bikes, but each day he travelled the 20 miles to his works at Burton-on-Trent on his 20-year-old 1,000cc Ariel Square Four combination.

"I just get a tremendous amount of enjoyment riding a bike. I suppose it's in the blood," said works manager Peter, of Mersey Road, Rugeley, in April 1978.

To pass on his knowledge of bikes, Peter taught youngsters how to ride in an RAC/ACU motorcycle course at Fair Oak School, Rugeley.

Supplying

A search through the archives of the *Chronicle*'s sister paper, the *Express & Star*, revealed many photographs about people and their two-wheeled modes of transport.

Securicor guards Harry Pritchard and Jack Ward took possession of electric powered mopeds in December 1973, a time of great worry about fuel prices.

A Brierley Hill factory was supplying what were claimed to be the first electric-powered mopeds in Britain. No petrol, no pollution and virtually noise free – that is the claim for the two-wheeled vehicles made by factory manager Colin Shaw, of Solo Power Equipment.

The story said the first hundred mopeds, which could do p to 25 miles before recharging, had already been bought by Securicor.

In 1967 Walter Edge was found outside his home in Hill Avenue, Lanesfield, Wolverhampton, proudly astride his 1928 long-stroke Sunbeam that he used daily.

Don Higham, of Aldridge, was pictured setting off for work on his 1925 Royal Enfield in September 1976. The Walsall recreation department landscape officer had bought it for £30 and spent five years restoring it.

Mark Wells and Paul Handley, both aged 16, were among Wednesbury mods saying "don't blame us" after complaints about motorcycle gangs which were said to be terrorising people on estates in October 1983.

Paul, of Kent Road, Woods estate, said: "It's ridiculous to say our bikes are high speed. My scooter's top speed is only 25mph."

"Don't blame us" – Mark Wells, left, and Paul Handley

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NEWS

Beacon is a gateway to the stars

BARR Beacon in Walsall has been named as the only Dark Sky Discovery Site in the area, meaning the lack of light pollution makes it a good place to see the stars.

Members of Walsall Astronomical Society regularly visit the site so they can explore the stars.

Alan Ledbury, chairman of the society, said "I've been into astronomy since I was 10 years old and it was a poster on a wall at Tipton Grammar school that caught my eye as it had pictures of planets."

Alan, aged 70, who lives in The Delves, used to work as a draftsman and has three grandchildren. Alan, who is married to Margaret, has been with the club for 20 years.

"I wanted to know more and got some books out of the library and when I was 17 I helped a friend build a telescope," he said.

"In those days there wasn't much money around and there weren't shops selling telescopes so if you wanted one you had to build it.

Anniversary

"We did it by grinding a lens out of a warship porthole and for the tube we rolled up a sheet of galvanised steel."

Alan explained that when his children had left home he decided to return to astronomy as a hobby.

"I bought a six inch Russian telescope, from the end of the Cold War when they were selling good quality instruments quite cheaply," he said.

The club started in 1987 so has just celebrated its 25th anniversary. It began as a branch-off from the Walsall Science Club as some of the members had an interest in astronomy.

When the number of members grew to a dozen the group clubbed together and bought a 12in telescope, which they have still got.

"We have quite a lot of instruments including a 10 inch Meade, which is something all astronomers have got and is the equivalent of a Ford Mondeo," he said.

"We also have special telescopes for looking at the sun – you need to have special equipment to be able to look at the sun as otherwise it can be dangerous."

The group meet every Thursday at Rushall Olympic Football Club. The group also meet at Barr Beacon, which recently gained the distinction of being the UK's first park to be awarded Urban Dark Sky Discovery Site status, largely due to the hard work of Morgan Bowers, senior countryside ranger.

Barr Beacon is one of the highest points in the West Midlands, boasting views that on a clear day can stretch to Wales.

Alan said: "We are lucky to have a site like Barr Beacon in Walsall and it is great for studying the night sky as there isn't much light pollution."

Starry-eyed – Walsall Astronomical Society meeting at Barr Beacon

Wonder of the cosmos – Carl Kimberley's photo of the Horse Head nebula

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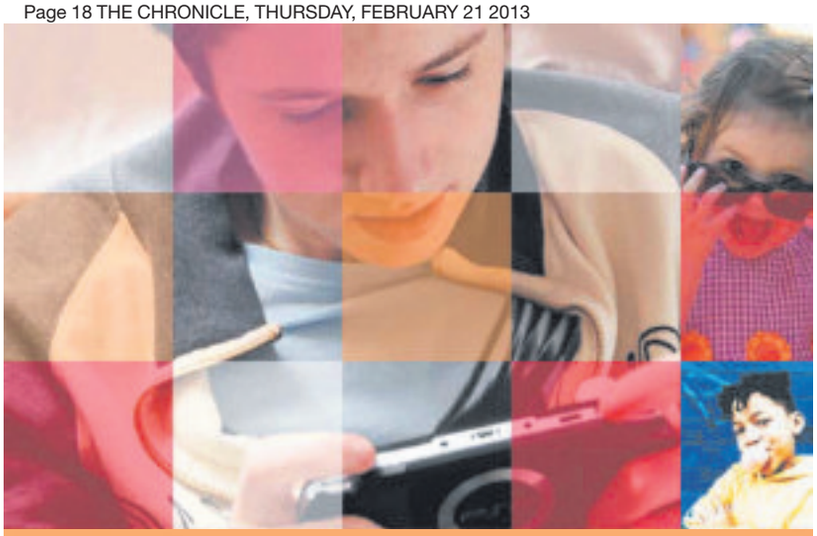

Be the future of fostering in Walsall

For more information come along to our Information Evening on Tuesday 26th February at 106 New Invention, Willenhall WV12 5EX at 5.15 pm or 6.30 pm

You can choose which time to attend and watch a short video and then talk to a foster carer or social worker

All enquiries: Freephone 0800 923 3706

www.walsall.gov.uk/fostercare

Walsall Council

COMPETITION

Home in on ideas for perfect design

THE National Homebuilding and Renovating Show returns from March 21-24 to provide advice and inspiration to help visitors create their perfect, bespoke property.

And Chronicle readers have the chance of going free as 20 pairs of ticket are up for grabs.

Britain's biggest self-build and renovation event is returning for its 22nd year to the NEC, Birmingham to educate and inspire visitors searching for new and imaginative ways to create their dream home.

Whether you're about to embark on building your own house, remodel your existing property, implement eco savvy technologies or undertake a major extension, the show offers a wealth of design and expertise, no matter the size, scale or stage of your project.

Visitors will be able to see and touch the latest products, learn firsthand about the hottest innovations and trends for 2013 as well as soak up advice from specialist key influencers including Michael Holmes, editor-in-chief of Homebuilding and Renovating magazine and one of the country's leading property experts.

Energy

The Eco Home Show is expected to be a very popular feature this year when adding sustainable features to the home is at the forefront of nearly all self-builders' minds.

With the Government's commitment to carbon reduction, the introduction of the Green Deal, the Renewable Heat Incentive and all UK homes being fitted with smart meters by 2020, homeowners have become increasingly aware of how important it is to live in an energy-efficient home. With this shift in consumer behaviour, the show will be able to meet visitors' requirements for eco knowledge, products and services.

The words 'planning permission' can often put many people off entering into their own self-build – but don't let planning horror stories get you down, head along to the Planning Clinic.

Standard tickets are £12 if booked before 3pm on March 20 or £17 on the door (under 16s free).

Visit www.homebuildingshow.co.uk or call the ticket hotline on 0844 581 1377 (10am-5pm daily)

Plenty of displays to look around and pick up information

Advice is available from Michael Holmes, editor-in-chief of Homebuilding and Renovating magazine

THE NATIONAL HOMEBUILDING & RENOVATING SHOW NEC, BIRMINGHAM 21 - 24 MARCH 2013

HOW TO ENTER

To be in with a chance of winning, simply answer this question:

How many years has the show already been at the NEC?

Send your answer on a postcard with your name, address and contact number to Homebuild Competition, Chronicle series (editorial), 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES. Closing date: Thursday, February 28. Usual rules apply. Editor's decision is final.

March Mayhem at Bloxwich Leisure Centre

Look at these new activities and special offers being launched in March!

SwimFit
Make the pool your gym with these instructor led sessions Tuesdays 9-10am & Wednesdays 8-9pm
Free for under 25's

Welcome to the Gym
6 week programme introducing young people (16-25) to key principles of using a gym
Free

Men's Evolve Programme
12 week weight management programme for men. Mondays 6pm (from 18th March) and Fridays 10am (from 22nd March)
Free

'School's Out' Aerobics Classes
A range of new aerobics classes in our purpose built studio
£1 for 11-25 year olds
£2 for over 25's

Disability Hydrotherapy
Exercise in water for adults with a disability
£3.30 or £2 with Move it card

No Strings Badminton
It's all about fun, fitness and making friends. Just turn up and play! Saturdays 10am-12 (from 2nd March)
Free

Jog Walsall
Instructor led jog for people who are looking to become more active
Free

Dodgeball
Great fun and great for fitness! New session for complete beginners. Wednesdays 8-9.30pm (from 6th March)
Only £1

Become a Gym Buddy
As a volunteer Gym Buddy you will motivate and support other gym users as well as receive reduced price gym membership

beactive · Lottery Funded · Sport England · Sportivate · change 4 Life

Find out more at www.walsall.gov.uk/marchmayhem

Walsall Council

For information on any of these exciting new activities please call Sport & Leisure Services on 01922 658080, or to find out about the existing programme call Bloxwich Leisure Centre on 01922 710295.

WANTED CARING PEOPLE

DO YOU HAVE:

- A spare room?
- A desire to help support a vulnerable young person?
- Patience?
- An understanding of young people?

HOSTS:

YMCA Open Door is a scheme that aims to provide homely surroundings to help 16 and 17 year olds gain the confidence and skills they need to become independent adults. We are recruiting hosts in The Black Country who can offer a temporary home to a young person.

REWARD:

You will receive a support package, over £100 each week and help a young person build a future.

YMCA OPEN DOOR

For more details or to discuss the service please contact us on:

0121 524 1957 or email **opendoor@ymcabc.org.uk**

YMCA Black Country Group

In association with: Supporting People • Dudley MBC • Sandwell MBC • Walsall Council • Wolverhampton City Council • Depaul UK • CHADD • First Base • Heantun Housing • Midland Landlord Accreditation Scheme.

Supported by homelessness transition funds

NEWS

School honours mayor and seeks descendants

Mayor Charles Coddy Walker picture from Walsall Local History Centre

THE HEADTEACHER at a Walsall school is appealing for relatives of one of the town's former mayors to come forward.

Mark Smith is hoping to track down descendants of Charles Coddy Walker and invite them to the academy's official opening on March 21 when the school is renamed in honour of the Edwardian civic dignitary.

The Charles Coddy Walker Academy, formerly North Walsall Primary School, became an academy on January 1, 2013.

Mr Walker was a local councillor for Leamore and twice mayor of Walsall, in 1903 and 1906. On his death in 1928, he left the land on which the academy now stands to the children of North Walsall and Ryecroft.

Relatives

Mr Smith, headteacher at the academy, said: "Councillor Walker has such strong links with both our school and Walsall itself, we would love to be able to find one of his relatives to help us celebrate at the opening."

If you are, or know, a descendant of Charles Coddy Walker, contact Jon Perks on 01527 832205.

Compass Tours by Rail

THE LAKELAND MOORLANDER
WEDNESDAY 1ST MAY (DAY EXCURSION BY CHARTER TRAIN)
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WE RUN DIRECT FROM: KIDDERMINSTER, STOURBRIDGE JUNCTION, ROWLEY REGIS, TAME BRIDGE PARKWAY, WALSALL, CANNOCK, HEDNESFORD, RUGELEY & STAFFORD

Our comfortable charter train is routed via Pendle Hill, then the world famous Settle to Carlisle Railway featuring the 24 arches of Ribblehead viaduct, Dentdale and the Eden Valley (see www.settle-carlisle.co.uk). Carlisle is home to a popular castle, as well as a great array of attractions, shops and places to eat. Our return journey is via the Cumbrian Coast, England's other most scenic railway (and the longest coastal railway in England). We journey via the Solway and Irish Sea, for many miles with the Lakeland Mountains in the East running via Whitehaven, St Bees, Ravenglass, Ulverston and Arnside to Carnforth. The same train returns you to boarding stations in the evening.

TRAIN FARES: £59 STANDARD CLASS (£44 for child under 16) & £99 FIRST CLASS (all ages)

CALL 0151 722 1147 (10am-6pm weekdays) to book

FOR FURTHER DETAILS, JOINING OUR NEWSLETTER & ONLINE BOOKING visit us at www.compasstoursbyrail.co.uk

All tickets are booked subject to our booking conditions (see website or contact us for a copy). Postal Bookings & Correspondence to: Compass Tours, 46 Hallville Road, Liverpool, L18 0HR.

Charity opens new hub for the disabled

DISABLED people in Walsall have received a boost thanks to Midland Mencap's new hub in the town centre.

The Walsall Hub, at 17 Lichfield Street, opened in January and offers a range of services for people with disabilities or learning disabilities.

Many of the services are free, including a new personal care suite featuring a height-adjustable toilet and shower.

by Peter Madeley

Visitors of all ages can take part in an arts and crafts club, whilst free courses are also available for adults with learning disabilities.

Café

Anyone who wants a break from their shopping can use the internet café, which offers snacks and drinks throughout the day.

There is also space available for groups to run activities, as well as meeting rooms that can be hired out.

The information centre is packed with leaflets and posters from local businesses and charities, and features a signposting service helping to promote shops and services across Walsall.

Mrs Charlotte Thursfield, facilities manager for Midland Mencap, said: "This is the only place in Walsall where disabled people can access an all-round service. We want as many people as possible to come and use this fantastic facility."

Walsall Hub is holding an open day today (Thursday) from 10am to 2pm for anyone wishing to see the facilities on offer.

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NEWS

Hole load of trouble for club after pitch invasion

Treasurer Bill Hickenbottom surveys the damage to the pitches at Wyrley Juniors' new base at Long Lane

VANDALS have dug dozens of holes in a junior football club's pitches that are being prepared to open next season.

Wyrley Juniors FC is Staffordshire's biggest amateur club and has been fundraising to raise the cash for new pitches at its £1.15 million revamped base in Long Lane, Newtown.

Bosses at the 32-year-old club, which has 700 footballers on its books, said the attack had put the development back, but said they more were still determined to open the pitches in time for next season. Around 60 holes were dug into the pitches and a sign was also stolen.

Father-of-two Bill Hickenbottom, who club treasurer and one of the founders, said a local resident discovered the vandalism and reported it to a club member.

Mindless

The 74-year-old, of Great Wyrley, said: "We have had a few break-ins before. It's mindless vandalism.

"It's freezing weather and the ground is rock hard, but they have managed to dig it up all over."

Essington councillor David Clifft, an executive member of the football club, has called the incident "worrying".

A sign worth £200, which displayed the club's name, was also recently taken from the site.

The grand total needed for the four new pitches – two full-size and two junior – is £165,000. Around £115,000 has already been raised and the FA's Football Foundation is contributing 80 per cent of the remainder which leaves the committee £11,000 to find over the next seven months.

Anyone with information on the vandalism should call police on 101 and quote incident reference number 402 of February 12.

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MNA Media

CLUB NEWS

WI guest proves a glass act

BILBROOK WI

FOLLOWING the usual business, president Julie Hammersley introduced the speaker for the February meeting, Cas Bailey.

Cas had visited before to talk about her life during her 32 years in the police force. This talk, "Cuffs to Glass", was about what came after she had retired.

Looking for something completely different and challenging to do she noticed a magazine advert for a 12-month course in glass techniques at Dudley College.

Classes were held in a disused glass factory in Brierley Hill. There were 12 students in her class ranging in age from their 20s to 60s.

Cas enjoyed her time there so much that she enrolled and completed a second year course.

After two years at college, Cas rented a studio workshop and started a small business. When the studio was sold, Cas had to look for new premises. She bought a new house and had a log house built in the garden for a workshop.

Cas explained the various techniques and brought some beautiful samples of her work. She can now be found selling her creations and taking commissions at Shugborough on crafts days.

Win Poulton gave a vote of thanks and te evening was rounded off with the raffle and refreshments.

The AGM will be on Tuesday, March 12 at the village hall, Joey's Lane at 7.30pm.

Historian gives reel insight into cinemas

Historian Ned Williams addressed the meeting

THE BLACK COUNTRY SOCIETY

THE Kingswinford branch of the Black Country Society met at St Mary's Church Hall on January 16 when historian Ned Williams was the speaker. He is a member and past president of the society.

Ned was born in Ilford, Essex but has lived in the Black Country since 1962. He taught at Wulfrun College for 30 years and then for 10 years with the Workers Educational Association.

A prolific writer, he now has 48 books to his name, the most recent ones being Black Country Cinemas and Black Country Theatres. His illustrated talk was of cinemas and entertainment in the Black Country. He gave a fascinating talk about cinemas no longer with us and explained that the buildings are often now used for other purposes such as bingo halls and warehouses. Many of them still retain the art deco styles inside.

He spoke about theatres including the now defunct Dudley Hippodrome. Ned also talked about early travelling players, circuses and fairgrounds and famous people who ran them events – Pat Collins being one.

The chairman thanked Ned for his talk and coffee was served.

Perils of public speaking

WALSALL CENTRAL TG

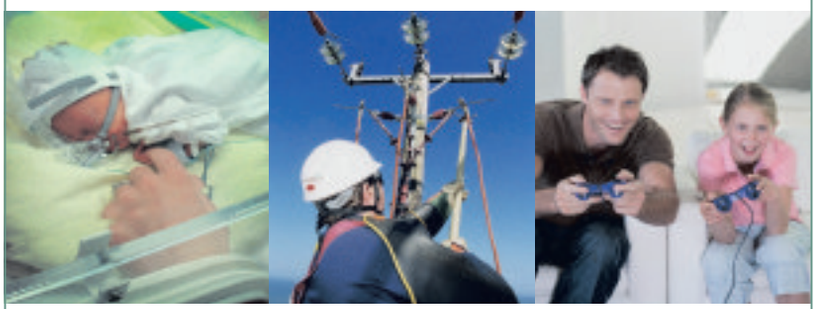
THE February meeting was opened by chairman Brenda White, who conducted the business.

Due to the closure of Mellish Townswomen's Guild, some of their members joined with the Central Guild who were very happy to welcome them. Speaker for the evening was Pamela Wheat, who gave an interesting talk on the "Perils of Public Speaking".

The next date for members will be the Annual General Meeting, taking place at 7pm on Tuesday, March 5 in the Mellish Room at Central Hall Methodist Church, Walsall.

This will include a bring and buy sale.

Power for life



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Look what's included...

Day 1: You'll arrive at your hotel late afternoon with time to settle in before dinner this evening.

Day 2: Full day out, we head west, cross the river Tamar into Cornwall to visit two beautiful coastal villages, Polperro & Looe.

Day 3: After breakfast, a morning trip along the coast to the fishing port of Brixham, watch the fishing boats and explore the variety of unique shops all located around the harbour side and the town centre. We return to Paignton early afternoon so you have the chance to spend some time in your resort.

Day 4: After a last breakfast we leave for home.

PLUS FREE cream tea at the hotel on one afternoon.

Queens Hotel, Paignton
This good quality hotel enjoys a flat level position just 200 yards from Paignton town centre and seafront. Its comfortable interior, fine restaurant, all year round entertainment lounge and heated indoor swimming pool ensure your stay will be a memorable one. All guest rooms have full facilities and lift to all floors.

Price includes: 3 nights dinner, bed & breakfast plus coach & trips out. *SS £15*

Coach departs: Friday 5th April £133

Lake District

Mini Break £89

Enjoy a trip to the Lake District and visit fascinating Botany Bay and the charming village of Cartmel. Stay overnight in a lovely hotel and enjoy a ride on the Haverthwaite steam railway and a cruise on Lake Windermere plus free time in Grasmere.

Look what's included...

Join our coach on **Sunday** morning for a leisurely journey to the Lake District.

Our first stop is the charming village of Cartmel, spend a leisurely hour here, then go on to our hotel with time to settle-in and freshen-up before dinner this evening.

Monday: Enjoy a hearty breakfast prior to a special day in the Lake District. The coach will take you to Haverthwaite to board a steam train for a short journey through the beautiful scenery of the Leven Valley to Lakeside. Here, we board a boat for a 40 minute cruise on stunning Lake Windermere to Bowness. Enjoy some free time in Bowness including time for lunch if you wish.

To round-off the day we take a short trip along the shores of Windermere, through Ambleside to Grasmere and stop here for a little while before we finally leave the Lake District for home.

Shap Wells Hotel
Situated in the Cumbrian fells in a secluded, wooded valley, high in the Shap Fells and surrounded by mountain streams and beautiful countryside with red deer, red squirrels and other wildlife within the grounds of the hotel.

Price includes: coach travel, hotel, dinner, breakfast, train and boat trip. *SS £10*

Coach departs: Sunday 12th May, 16th June, 11th August & 1st September £89

Ireland

Bantry Bay

5 Day Coach Trip £229

A 5 day trip to Ireland for a great value price...A lovely new trip to Ireland staying in what many consider to be the best part of Ireland...Bantry Bay and County Cork.

Look what's included...

Day 1: We go to Holyhead and board the 12pm Ferry to Dublin. Arrive at our hotel early evening.

Day 2: Breakfast, then a trip around the bay to Glengarriff and then the ferry to the beautiful 'Garden' Isle of Garnish to visit the renowned Ilncullin Gardens

Day 3: Breakfast, then we visit the charming, typically Irish towns of Skibbereen and the 'gourmet' capital of Ireland - Kinsale.

Day 4: Breakfast, today is free to explore Bantry at your own pace. You could take the boat to Whiddy Island or visit fabulous Bantry House nearby.

Day 5: After a last, breakfast we leave for the Dublin to Holyhead ferry and home.

Price includes: 4 nights dinner, bed & breakfast, coach & ferry travel & trips out. *SS £60*

Coach departs: Sunday 21st April £229

Cornwall

5 Day Coach Trip *from* £199

Beautiful Hotel

from only £199

Look what's included...

Day 1: Arrive at the hotel late afternoon, before dinner this evening.

Day 2: After breakfast, a trip to **Truro** - a small, bustling city that's easy to get around, with lots of character and interesting things to see.

Day 3: We take the coast road from Newquay past Watergate Bay to the fishing village of **Padstow** and later, **Tintagel**.

Day 4: Today is left free so you can explore Newquay at your own pace.

Day 5: After a last, breakfast we leave for home.

Esplanade Newquay ★★★
Rated 3 star silver, overlooking fistral beach with breathtaking sea views, indoor pool, restaurant with ocean views, 'Peebles Bar' for dramatic sunsets, all rooms have full facilities.

Price includes: 4 nights dinner, bed & breakfast plus travel & trips out. *SS £20*

Coach departs: Monday 18th March £199
Monday 15th April £219

Liverpool

Mini Break £89

2-day break, wonderful 4 star hotel with dinner and full breakfast and lots included for a great-value price.

Radisson Blu Hotel Liverpool
Luxury hotel situated on one of the main thoroughfares of the city – close to the Liver Buildings. Settle in to your comfortable ensuite room with full facilities and look forward to dinner this evening.
Enjoy a relaxing evening with a tipple or two in the hotel's swish 'White' bar or retire to your room and treat yourself to a movie and maybe a spot of room service.

Sunday: Coach this morning to the Wirral on the other side of the river to Liverpool, here we board a 'Ferry across the Mersey', your coach will be waiting in Liverpool to take you to the Albert Dock home to Tate Liverpool, Beatles Story, Maritime Museum and Slavery Museum as well as speciality shops, bars and cafes. Late afternoon we meet back at the coach to go to our hotel, just a few minutes away.

Monday: Breakfast, then a local guide will meet our coach and give you a tour of the city. Then we go to the new shopping area known as 'Liverpool 1' for a couple of hour's free time to shop and perhaps a spot of lunch. Around 1:30pm we visit one of the largest Cathedrals in the world, a guided tour will tell you history of the building. An afternoon cream tea in the Cathedral is included before we leave for home.

Price includes: coach, ferry, hotel, dinner, breakfast, guided city tour, cathedral tour & afernoon tea. *SS £10*

Coach departs: Sunday 19th May & 23rd June £89

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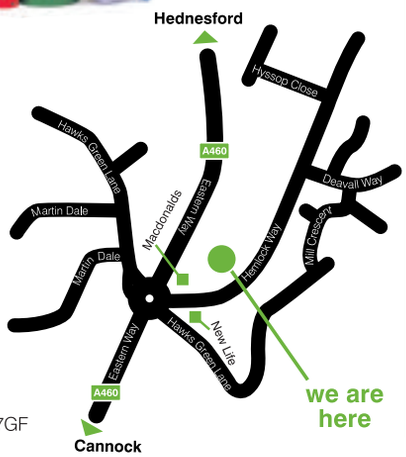

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your donated items can provide 25% more care at no extra cost to you. Ask in store for details.

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Photographs are representative

NEWS

Police seek an 'Elephant Man' robber

Robber dubbed 'the Elephant Man' because of the bag, like that worn in the movie about a disfigured Victorian

POLICE are hunting a masked robber – described as looking like The Elephant Man – who stole hundreds of pounds from a bookmakers in Walsall after threatening staff with a knife.

The man stole £350 from behind the counter at Corals Racing, in Chester Road, Streetly, before fleeing. He used a grey T-shirt with cut-out eye holes to cover his face and was wearing mustard coloured trousers and a black quilted style jacket.

Staff locked themselves in a back office when the man entered the shop. Police are appealing for information to try and trace the man pictured on CCTV.

Surprising

Detective Constable Martin Beebee, from Bloxwich CID, said: "This is one of the most unusual masked robbers we have encountered, and he can only be described as looking like The Elephant Man. It's surprising he was able to see anything at all through this makeshift mask.

"We particularly want to hear from anyone who saw the man entering or leaving the shop, or anyone with any other information that can help us to identify him."

The Elephant Man was the name given to a severely deformed man called Joseph Merrick who lived in 19th century London and wore a hood and cap when in public to hide his deforming.

A film based on his life story, called The Elephant Man, starring John Hurt in the title role, was released in 1980.

The incident happened at 4.45pm on January 26. Anyone with information can call police on 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Raiders terrified shop manageress

RAIDERS who smashed their way into two stores within an hour, have been jailed for four years.

The pair struck at the Co-op in Penkridge but finding they could not open a cigarette cabinet they fled with an empty cash drawer and some postage stamps. They made off in a stolen BMW and within an hour they were using a paving slab to break through the front door of Martin McColls's shop in Bentley, Walsall.

The duty manageress was knocked to the floor during the raid, Stafford Crown Court heard.

Crawling

Kim Smedley was arriving to start work when she saw two men crawling through the smashed hole in the door. One of them, Stephen Keats, ran up and pushed her. The other raider, Patrick Rafferty started stuffing cigarettes into a wheelie bin and then marched her into the rear office demanding to know where the safe was.

After being told it was on a timer, he opened the cigarette cabinet and passed more packets to Keats. They again made off in the stolen BMW.

Keats, aged 24, of Woden Road, Heath Town, Wolverhampton, and Rafferty, 24, of no fixed address, both admitted charges of robbery and conspiracy to burgle. Keats also admitted handling the stolen BMW.

Judge David Fletcher told them: "This lady in the shop was manhandled but it wasn't so much the bruising, it was the sheer terror – she was a woman on her own, 5am on an October morning when it was dark."

Keats denied pushing Mrs Smedley to the ground.

The stolen BMW was foundby police in Pendeford, following a tip-off only hours after the raids on October 2.

Rafferty was found at the home of Lee Potts in Wayside and Keats was in the kitchen with three bins full of cigarettes. A fourth suspect, Amanpreet Hayre, was arrested.

Hayre, 26, of Prestwood Road, Wednesfield, and Potts, 28, of Wayside, Pendeford, both admitted a charge of handling stolen goods. Potts, who said he had no knowledge of the shop raids, admitted a separate offence of producing cannabis and told to do 80 hours unpaid community work.

Hayre, who accepted a charge of assisting in the retention of stolen goods, was found guilty by jurors of a separate offence of dangerous driving at speeds of up to 70mph in Wolverhampton. He was jailed for a total of 14 months and banned from driving for a year.

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FOCUS ON BLOXWICH

Let there be LED light say residents in trial

A NEW type of street lamp has lightened up the lives Bloxwich residents as part of a pilot for a £250,000 project which is now being rolled out across the borough.

by Marisha Cysewski

According to a poll of more than a thousand residents, over halfthought the new lights brought a significant improvement in lighting. This included views from people in Turnberry Close and Creswell Crescent.

Councillor Tom Ansell, transport boss at Walsall Counci, said: "We're very pleased that residents agree with us that these lights are better.

Economical

"They're more economical but they also shine brighter on the place where they're needed."

More than 590 old-style sodium orange lights were replaced with LEDs that use less power but meet requirements for light quality.

Cllr Ansell added: "We're now looking to expand the scheme into the Leamore area. Our contractor Amey is expected to begin installations next month, with the 'switch on' to take place sometime in April.

"Obviously, we would like all residential areas of the borough to benefit but it's a gradual process. We have to identify what funding is available to expand the scheme but we're confident that eventually more and more areas will benefit."

Kevin Grigg, Amey operations manager, said: "The LED technology means that the light they give out is clearer and enables people to see colours more clearly than with old-style lamps."

The lights are connected to a new computer-controlled system.

Victorian England caps sale

Villa's Charlie Athersmith

RARE early England caps belonging to a Bloxwich-born footballer more than 100 years ago were due to go under the hammer at auction.

Aston Villa player Charlie Athersmith was famous for scoring a goal while holding an umbrella. During one match in the driving rain and freezing cold, the right winger borrowed an umbrella from someone in the crowd and went on to score while still clutching it.

Athersmith has been described as a colourful character and some of his memorabilia was up for auction at Bonhams in Chester yesterday (Wednesday). It was believed that two of his caps could fetch as much as £1,000 each.

Born in Bloxwich in 1872, Athersmith was one of the star players in Aston Villa's 1890s and 1900s team. He donned the claret and blue in three FA cup finals, including 1897 when Villa won the double.

Athersmith started his career at Bloxwich Wanderers and Saltley and played for England 12 times. He died aged 37.

Pupils on target for charity

CHILDREN from Leamore Primary School raised money for charity by taking part in The Soccer Star Challenge.

Each pupil took penalties at a special inflatable goal with the best shooters receiving prizes including trophies, footballs and tickets for a trip to Wembley. The children raised over £3000, half of which will be donated to the Make-A-Wish Foundation, with the other half used to buy sports equipment for the school.

Board walk – Roger Edwards, president of the English Chess Federation, visited Bloxwich Junior Chess Club to play 17 of the members simultaneously

Masterful move by president

THE president of the English Chess Federation passed on his knowledge of the game to a new generation – when he simultaneously took on 17 opponents.

Roger Edwards took on the challenge of playing against members of Bloxwich Junior Chess Club in a two-hour contest. He won nine games, lost four and drew four at the event, at St James Church in Old Lane.

Mr Edwards was invited back to the club after presenting the young members with achievement awards in December.

Ray Dolan, 61, of Bloxwich, who runs the club with his wife Eunice, said: "They played well against him. He had some strong opponents and he did have a battle on his hands. I've played people simultaneously before and it is quite a feat. He played them for two hours."

For club details call 07980 101744.

Highway closures for work

ROAD closures will be in force in Bloxwich for a carriageway resurfacing.

Leamore Lane and Harden Road will be closed at its junctions with Bloxwich Road until Sunday between 8pm and 6am.

Two-way temporary traffic signals will be in operation in Bloxwich Road and signed diversion routes will be in place.

Steve Griffiths, from Walsall Council's traffic management department, said: "The works have been organised by the Highways Maintenance Group, and will be carried out by Tarmac National Contracting Ltd.

"The aim of the work is to strengthen the road pavement and provide a new running surface.

"The planned works will make use of modern surfacing materials, which will reduce road noise and spray."

Kath's walk helps hospice

A BLOXWICH councillor braved the rain and snow in a fundraising walk for St Giles Walsall Hospice.

Councillor Kath Phillips, of Bloxwich East, raised more than £600 by walking laps around King George V Playing Fields, Bloxwich.

She belongs to the WS3 Friends of Walsall Hospice group and held the fundraiser on he 18th anniversary of her mother's death.

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Expert Alys' passion for veg simply grows on you

Passionate gardener, author and TV presenter Alys Fowler is among the latest recruits to one of the biggest garden shows in the Midlands DANNY FARRAGHER caught up with her while she was cycling home

ADOPTED Midlander Alys Fowler was almost predestined to spend her working life growing, eating or talking about gardening in general and vegetables in particular. During her childhood in Silchester, Hampshire she was inspired by her mother who lived the good life.

"It all started when I was a kid, my mum is just an amazing gardener so it was a natural progression I suppose. I grew up in the garden with her and by the time I was 16 I just thought I would go off and train as a horticulturist. It has never occurred to me do anything else."

Alys, now aged 34, trained at Wisley, the RHS head training ground in Surrey. From there she moved across the pond to the New York Botanic Gardens and then went on to do a three year diploma at Kew gardens topping it all off with a masters. It was while living and studying in the Big Apple, the author and TV presenter became involved in a movement which allowed locals to grow their own plants and food. "The NY botanic gardens are in the Bronx and I lived in the lower east side of Manhattan where all the community gardens are famously based.

Alys is a successful author

"The one I worked on didn't grow food, you just have to imagine if you live in lower Manhattan there is one tiny park and nobody has any garden, so when you have no community space whatsoever you have to join a community garden. So it was more out of necessity they were born."

This adapting to your surroundings is a something Alys believes in deeply and has spent a great deal of time and energy writing about her experience in her Guardian newspaper column and through several books.

Expert Alys Fowler has a passion for vegetables

"I live in the city, in south Birmingham so it kind of makes sense to talk and write about the thing you are doing which is living in a terraced house in a typical street, with a typical back garden and then try to fulfil my smallholding dreams in the city."

Just like her garden, Alys seems to have been planted where she could blossom and while she speaks of the Second City, which has become her home, with great affection it wasn't her original intention to become an "honorary" Brummie.

"I ended up in the midlands by mistake, but I liked it so much I stayed. I came up for a job at BBC Birmingham and I thought I would come for six months max. I told everyone don't worry I'm only going to Birmingham for six months but six months turned into seven months, turned into eight months, turned into six years. I love Birmingham, I think it's an amazing city. It's a bit of a hidden gem which I know most people don't go around saying that about Birmingham. It's got a really astonishing outlook as a city in that there's a really good strong sense of community, people are really friendly; people are really open."

"The thing about Birmingham is it's quite a spread out city. There are a lot of allotments, and so many people have their own back gardens. I suppose the issue here is really to get people to utilise their own back gardens rather than create community spaces, because if you get on a train from the city centre and head out you will see 101 back gardens with nothing more than a trampoline or a chair in them.

"So I think there's a resource there that can always be used, it's not necessarily always about creating new spaces."

Enjoyable

Alys also wants everyone to get to know the obvious profits of growing your own as well as the knock-on health benefits.

"I think it's an amazingly, enjoyable thing to grow your own food. You get really healthy - probably organic, if you choose to go down that road - food at a reasonably good price. You put in a lot of hours to get it. It's not like it's "free", you have to work really hard but while you're working really hard, you are outside enjoying nature, getting fit, doing something that's genuinely pleasurable.

"Growing food is a really lovely thing to do and you get to meet other people who are likeminded."

Her enthusiasm for what she does is infectious and she wants to pass on that passion to others.

"I have never met someone who once they have got bitten by the bug has turned around and gone 'nah I don't get this'. You have that one early success, maybe it's growing a basil plant, or you chuck a potato in the ground and eight weeks later you get 10. Whatever it is you get that tiny, early success and you just get bitten and you get it, and I guess it's getting people to have a go at that early success that really matters." Now Alys is among the newest recruits to one of the biggest and fastest growing horticultural shows around, the Edible Garden Show which is now in its third year and dedicated to the very practises she is so passionate about.

Alys is one of the newest recruits to the show

"There have been a lot of horticultural shows but they haven't really been aimed at the ordinary grower, they tend to be old school, show your big veg type shows or they've been like Chelsea which is aimed at really a different kind of gardening. So it's really exciting to go to a show where there are so many different things, products to learn about and people to hear talk and meet your fellow growers.

"You spend all your time on your allotment working and so there is this time in the year where you can get to meet everyone else."

Alys will be there over the three days giving two talks a day on growing vegetables but her basic advice to anyone thinking of getting the gardening bug is simple

"Start small and grow with your garden, don't try to dig up the whole place. Do it bit by bit and learn to grow with the space. The number one rule with designing is you have to make sure your plants fit the space, or else you are on a ride to nowhere. That's what kind of hard to dissuade people, they have a nice idea in their head that they want roses and jasmine and whatnot and they've got completely the wrong space for that.

"Once you learn to love your soil and learn to love it for what it is and not try and change it like some bad boyfriend, you can find you can grow all sorts of good things."

Alys will be giving advice, tips and information along with a host of other experts at The Edible Garden Show, Stoneleigh Manor, Warwickshire from March 15-17.

For more information about the show visit www.theediblegardenshow.co.uk.

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REVIEWS

Joseph juggernaut shows no sign of slowing

The cast of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, with Keith Jack in the leading role

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Wolverhampton Grand

Go go Joseph ... there just seems no stopping the theatrical juggernaut that this Old Testament pop musical has become.

First conceived by Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber more than 40 years ago, its popularity does not decline and it could lay claim to being the nation's favourite musical.

This latest touring production from Bill Kenwright goes all out to please, the songs come slick and fast – mostly parodies from country music to Elvis and Parisian chanson – delivered by an energetic cast.

It tells the Book of Genesis tale about how favourite son Joseph is sold into slavery by his 11 jealous brothers, ends up in Egypt where, after a spell in jail, he becomes the pharoah's right hand man and is finally reconciled with those sinful siblings and reunited with his father. Keith Jack, runner-up in the TV search for Joseph, is a charismatic leading man with a smile that lit up the theatre and delivered his big number, Any Dream Will Do, at least three times. He got excellent support from Lauren Ingram as the Narrator.

The night ended with a crowd-pleasing Joseph megamix for which the audience was encouraged to get out of their seats and dance in the aisles.

Leon Burakowski

Excellent interpretation in spite of the flimsy set

Coppelia, The Russian State Ballet of Siberia, Wolverhampton Grand

COLOURFUL costumes and confident performances made this Coppelia an excellent traditional interpretation of a ballet classic by this Russian company.

Elena Pogorelaya was strong and delightful as Swanilda and also posing as the living doll Coppelia, played in doll form by Yana Tugeva, with powerful support from Kirill Bulychev as Swanilda's wayward boyfriend Franz.

The light-hearted production made the most of the Grand's stage and had the benefit of the company's own orchestra to perform the familiar score by Leo Delibes. It's just a shame that the rather flimsy set had obviously seen better days.

Leon Burakowski

Plucky Pallot regains composure to deliver

Nerina Pallot, Glee Club, Birmingham

IN BETWEEN regaling the packed crowd with opinions of dodgy lingerie and Sharon Osbourne's plastic surgery, Brit Award-nominated Nerina Pallot entertained her fans with the last leg of her Lonely Valentine tour.

She was interrupted at one point by her husband letting her know their baby son, who was ill, was now all right. As she tried to move into her next song her emotions got the better of her and she broke down with relief, but managed to compose herself quite quickly.

The plucky Pallot was soon back on track and quickly moved on to the likes of Mr King, Real Late Starter and Turn Me On Again and even at one stage allowed the audience to throw in a request.

Danny Farragher

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Chiller is staged by Circle Players

THE Circle Players' next production at Aldridge is Veronica's Room, a chilling mystery from the pen of Ira Levin, author of Rosemary's Baby.

Veronica's Room is a thriller about a pair of students enticed to a mansion by its caretakers because one of them looks like the long-dead daughter of the family for whom they work.

The thriller directed by Helen Gilfoyle opened at the Aldridge Theatre, in Noddy Park Road, Aldridge, last night (Wednesday) and continues until Saturday.

Curtain up is at 7.30pm and tickets cost £8 (£7 concessions on February 20 and 21), available on 07949 358814 (from 6.30pm-8.30pm) or by e-mailing gail_ashmore@hotmail.com

New film season is being launched

STEVEN Spielberg'sepic War Horse will launch the inaugural film season at the Black Box Theatre at the University of Wolverhampton's Performance Hub at its Walsall Campus tonight (Thursday) at 6.30.

The season at the Gorway Road venue continues on February 28 with Anna Karenina, starring Keira Knightley in the title role. Tickets for screenings cost £5 (£4 concessions).

Future films in the season include Bafta Best Film winner Argo, documentary Marley and rom-com The Perks of Being A Wallflower. See the www.wlv.ac.uk/tph website.

Glamorous home town role as Sophie joins High Society

THE GLITZY world of American 'High Society' in the 1940s will be brought to the stage at Wolverhampton Grand next week.

Among performers preparing for curtain-up on the musical is Sophie Bould, a former member of South Staffs Musical Theatre Company who is now a professional actor.

The former pupil of St Dominic's School, in Brewood, previously wowed West End audiences playing Liesl in The Sound of Music after first walking the boards at the Grand.

Now aged 31, she said: "I was eight when the theatre company were performing South Pacific and they needed a youngster to play a little French girl. My mum Veronica was with the company. I was at the Grand Theatre for a week and I was bitten by the bug."

Sophie Bould with Daniel Boys in the Cole Porter musical High Society

Sinatra

Well Did You Evah and True Love are two of the most famous songs from High Society, which will feature Sophie alongside Daniel Boys and former Robin of Sherwood Michael Praed.

The Cole Porter musical was a 1956 film with Grace Kelly, Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby and Louis Armstrong. That was itself based on play The Philadelphia Story, a 1940 film with Katherine Hepburn, Cary Grand and James Stewart.

High Society is at the Grand Theatre from Tuesday to Saturday, then at Birmingham Hippodrome from May 14 to 18.

Acrobatic action at The Moscow State Circus, coming to Wolverhampton Civic Hall

Circus and Disney fun

ICONS of Russian and American popular culture are coming to the West Midlands to entertain families.

Disney On Ice returned to Birmingham's LG Arena yesterday (Wednesday) for a five-day run of their new extravaganza Let's Party.

A medley of festivals from around the world, it is hosted by Mickey and Minnie Mouse and features favourites from such movies as Lilo & Stich and Toy Story, plus an array of Disney Princesses and Villains.

Legend

Then next week the Moscow State Circus rolls into Wolverhampton, swapping a big top for the Civic Hall on Tuesday and Wednesday, February 26 and 27, for a show based on a Russian legend.

Babushkin Sekret concerns a search for a chair containing treasure. The story will involve performances by high-wire artists, acrobats, jugglers and clowns.

Daredevil stunt is live on screen

EXTREME sports fans can get high-octane fun as they witness a live-streamed world record attempt ahead of the first screening of Nitro Circus: The Movie 3D at Showcase Walsall on Thursday, February 28, at 7:15pm.

Kick-starting the adrenaline filled night will be the world-famous Nitro Team with a stunt that is being streamed via satellite to Showcase Walsall from the O2 in London. Cinema-goers can watch the 18 daredevils try to simultaneously back-flip motorbikes in an attempt to break the world record for the most number of motorbikes in the air at one time.

General tickets are priced at £10, with children and students at £7. 3D glasses, if required, are available for £1.20.

Intimate drama in a studio venue

EMOTIONAL drama Skylight by David Hare is the next studio production at Highbury Theatre Centre, in Sheffield Road, Sutton Coldfield, from Monday to Saturday.

A play perfectly suited to the intimate space, Skylight is about two lovers meeting again after three years. Although intense, this play is described as also having moments of laughter. The cast includes Martin Walker and Bhupinder Dhamu.

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What's On!

SATURDAY'S TV 23.02.13

Listings supplied by Press Association

CHOICE

Sunetra Sarker

Casualty
BBC1, 8.40pm
Last week we met estranged couple David and Kate. When we catch up with them here, he struggles to keep his temper in check after their son Nathan is rushed to the ED after collapsing while on a day out with Kate. The fact that Kate then announces she wants access to their son, coupled with bad news about the youngster's future treatment, stuns David so much, he decides to do something very foolish indeed. Meanwhile, Zoe returns, goes berserk at Ash and then offers him a permanent job. Also starring Patrick Robinson.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Nigel Slater's Simple Cooking. (R) **12.00** BBC News; Regional News; Weather. **12.15** Football Focus. **1.00** Bargain Hunt. **2.00** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. **4.20** BBC News; Regional News; Weather. **4.30** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. England v France (Kick-off 5.00pm).

7.00 Let's Dance for Comic Relief. Steve Jones and Alex Jones present the second heat of the contest, featuring Jon Culshaw, Antony Cotton, members of the cast of Waterloo Road, Kim Woodburn and Rosemary Shrager.

8.25 The National Lottery Saturday Night Draws. New series. OJ Borg presents as the balls are set rolling to decide the all-important numbers. Including the Lotto, Thunderball and Lotto Plus 5 draws.

8.40 Casualty. Zoe returns from sick leave and clashes with Ash, Jeff must persuade a man to act in his son's best interests and Fletch is determined to help an elderly gentleman in love.

9.30 Mrs Brown's Boys. Agnes and the Brown family await the fruits of their fraud after faking Grandad's death to get a payout, but the insurance company starts to grow suspicious. (R)

10.00 BBC News; Weather.

10.20 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches; National Lottery Update.

11.40 The Football League Show.

12.55 Weatherview. **1.00** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 Close. **7.30** Great British Menu. (R) **8.00** Great British Menu. (R) **8.30** Great British Menu. (R) **9.00** Great British Menu. (R) **9.30** Great British Menu. (R) **10.00** A History of Britain by Simon Schama. (R) **11.00** Meet the Ancestors. (R) **11.30** Map Man. (R) **12.00** Indian Food Made Easy. (R) **12.30** Mastermind. (R) **1.00** University Challenge. (R) **1.30** Talking Pictures. **2.15 Film:** The Black Shield of Falworth. (1954) **3.50** Coast. **4.00** Flog It! **4.30** Final Score. **5.15** Live Cycling: World Track Championships.

7.00 Top Gear. Jeremy Clarkson puts the new Kia Cee'd through a peculiar road test, Richard Hammond drives the Mastretta MXT, and three high-performance hatchbacks are tested on the track. (R)

8.00 Dad's Army. The platoon has a steam engine problem. (R)

8.30 A Wolf Called Storm: Natural World Special. Cameraman Jeff Turner spends a year following the lives of a wolf and its pack in the north of Canada, learning how the animals survive in the harsh wilderness. (R)

9.30 Howard Goodall's Story of Music. The composer examines the ways in which modernism and the birth of recorded sound in the late 19th century changed the way music was played, heard and distributed.

10.30 Funny Business. Comedians who work on cruise ships. Last in the series.

11.30 Film: The Men Who Stare at Goats. (2009) Satirical comedy, starring George Clooney and Ewan McGregor.

12.55 Close.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Handy Manny. **6.10** Handy Manny. **6.25** The Hive. (R) **6.35** The Hive. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan. (R) **7.00** Dino Dan. (R) **7.10** Canimals. (R) **7.20** Canimals. (R) **7.25** Bookaboo. **7.40** Matt Hatter Chronicles. (R) **8.05** Kick Buttowski – Suburban Daredevil. **8.15** Kick Buttowski – Suburban Daredevil. **8.30** Victorious. (R) **9.00** Jessie. **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. **10.25** My Tasty Travels with Lynda Bellingham. (R) **11.25** Dinner Date. **12.25** Countrywise. **12.40** ITV News; Weather. **12.45 Film:** Carry On Up the Jungle. (1970) **2.30** The Chase: Celebrity Special. (R) **3.30** Midsomer Murders. (R) **5.30** Regional Programme; Weather. **5.45** ITV News; Weather.

6.00 Totally You've Been Framed! Harry Hill narrates a review of the show's most comical clips, featuring amazing accidents, cute kids and the funniest members of the animal kingdom. (R)

7.00 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway. New series. The Geordie duo's entertainment show returns, featuring a performance by Robbie Williams in the first edition. Danny DeVito is in the voiceover booth.

8.20 Take Me Out. A rugby player, a student, a morris dancer and a security adviser enter the love lift in the hope of impressing 30 single women. Paddy McGuinness presents. Last in the series.

9.50 The Jonathan Ross Show. Celebrity interviews.

10.50 ITV News; Weather.

11.05 Film: The Gauntlet. (1977) Action adventure, starring Clint Eastwood.

1.05 Jackpot247. **3.00** In Plain Sight. (R) **3.45** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.05 Sali Mali. (R) **6.10** The Hoobs. (R) **6.35** The Hoobs. (R) **7.00** Will & Grace. (R) **7.25** Freesports on 4. **7.55** The Morning Line. **8.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.20** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.50** Frasier. (R) **10.20** Frasier. (R) **10.50** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.20** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.45** The Simpsons. (R) **12.10** The Simpsons. (R) **12.40** Secret Millionaire Ireland. (R) **1.45** Channel 4 Racing. **4.05** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.35** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.05** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.40** Come Dine with Me. (R)

6.10 Come Dine with Me. Rose Proenca hosts the final dinner party in Portsmouth. (R)

6.40 Channel 4 News.

6.55 4thought.tv.

7.00 The Queen's Mother in Law. The story of Prince Philip's mother Princess Alice, a great-granddaughter of Queen Victoria who turned her back on royal life to work with the poor in Greece. (R)

8.00 Kevin McCloud's Man Made Home. The Grand Designs presenter builds an oak-framed cabin using recycled materials, aiming to create a retreat where he can get away from the rat race. (R)

9.00 Film: Terminator Salvation. (2009) In the future, resistance fighter John Connor leads a war against the deadly robots that have taken over the world. Sci-fi thriller sequel, with Christian Bale and Sam Worthington.

11.10 Film: Rising Sun. (1993) Thriller, starring Sean Connery and Wesley Snipes.

1.35 Southland. **2.15** Hollyoaks. (R) **4.20** Deal or No Deal. (R) **5.15** Countdown. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00** Power Rangers Samurai. (R) **10.35** Batman: The Brave and the Bold. **11.10** Looney Tunes. (R) **11.20** Looney Tunes. (R) **11.25** Monkey Life. (R) **11.55** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.55 Film:** I Dream of Murder. (2006) **2.40 Film:** Corrina, Corrina. (1994) **4.55** 5 News Weekend. **5.00 Film:** Columbo: Ransom for a Dead Man. (1971)

6.55 CSI: NY. Mac tells Flack about the persistent anonymous calls he is receiving, and the team investigates a string of audacious robberies carried out by crooks equipped with hi-tech gadgetry. (R)

7.40 NCIS. Ducky is attacked by a knife-wielding woman who accuses him of war crimes, alleging he tortured and killed her brother in Afghanistan in the early 1980s. Starring David McCallum. (R)

8.35 NCIS. The agents investigate the private life of a Navy captain whose actions may have led to his death, while McGee finds a love interest on the internet. (R)

9.30 Law & Order: Special Victims Unit. Benson and Stabler are called upon to investigate when a man contacts the police after discovering a dead woman in his bed.

10.25 Law & Order: Criminal Intent.

11.25 CSI: Crime Scene Investigation. (R)

12.15 SuperCasino. **4.00** HouseBusters. (R) **4.25** Divine Designs. (R) **4.50** Rough Guide To. (R) **5.05** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.15** The Milkshake! Show. (R) **5.40** Thomas & Friends. (R) **5.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Merlin **7.45** Doctor Who **8.35 Film:** National Treasure: Book of Secrets (2007) **10.30** World's Craziest Fools **11.00** Family Guy **11.45** American Dad!

BBC Four
7.00 Britain's Natural World **8.00** Baroque! From St Peter's to St Paul's **9.00** Spiral 4: State of Terror **10.45** The Joy of the Single **11.45** Country at the BBC

ITV2
3.35 Film: Toy Story 2 (1999) **5.30 Film:** Mr Bean's Holiday (2007) **7.20 Film:** Jurassic Park (1993) **9.50** Take Me Out – The Gossip **10.50** Fake Reaction **11.40 Film:** Gremlins (1984)

ITV3
1.55 A Touch of Frost **4.00 Film:** Carry On Girls (1973) **5.50** Agatha Christie's Marple **7.55** Rosemary & Thyme **9.00** Midsomer Murders **11.00 Film:** The Pianist (2002)

ITV4
3.10 Film: The Upturned Glass (1947) **5.00 Film:** Invitation to a Gunfighter (1964) **7.00** TT Legends **7.30** GT Academy **8.00** The Sweeney **9.00** River Monsters: Lethal Legends **10.00 Film:** Raging Bull (1980)

E4
3.35 Rules of Engagement **6.00** The Big Bang Theory **7.00** Happy Endings **8.00** How I Met Your Mother **8.30** 2 Broke Girls **9.00 Film:** Beverly Hills Cop II (1987) **11.05** The Big Bang Theory

Film4
2.50 Speed 2: Cruise Control (1997) **5.10** Nacho Libre (2006) **6.55** America's Sweethearts (2001) **9.00** The Runaways (2010) Premiere. Biopic of the 1970s rock band, starring Kristen Stewart and Dakota Fanning. **11.05** Dog Soldiers (2002)

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SUNDAY'S TV 24.02.13

Listings supplied by Press Association

CHOICE

Yotam Ottolenghi

Ottolenghi's Mediterranean Feast Channel 4, 7pm

Okay so we don't really need any more culinary programmes hogging the schedules - it's a big enough head-scratcher trying to choose between the crop of TV chefs already on offer. However, you'll probably join us in making an exception for this particular one - even if it is only because he's getting us out and about to various idyllic destinations. First up in his exploration of the Mediterranean's cuisine, Yotam heads to Marrakech, Morocco, where he learns about the city's street food and dines at Jemaa El Fna square.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.35** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Countryfile. (R) **11.55** Weather for the Week Ahead. **12.00** BBC News. **12.05** Bargain Hunt. **12.30** Call the Midwife. (R) **1.30** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. **4.00** Escape to the Country. **4.30** Songs of Praise. **5.05** Penguins – Spy in the Huddle. (R)

6.05 Deadly 60 on a Mission. New series. Steve Backshall continues his quest to encounter the world's 60 deadliest animals, heading to South Africa in search of great white sharks, cheetahs and venomous snakes.

6.35 BBC News; Regional News; Weather.

7.00 Countryfile. Matt Baker and Julia Bradbury explore Bristol, Tom Heap investigates issues associated with illegally produced meat and Adam Henson finds out how a breed of cow is being preserved. Including Weather for the Week Ahead.

8.00 Call the Midwife. Jenny tries to reconcile a dying man with his only remaining daughter, while Dr Turner and the midwives carry out a mass screening for tuberculosis in Poplar.

9.00 Ripper Street. Jackson is accused of being the Ripper and faces the death penalty, while Reid investigates the suspected kidnapping of Rose. Last in the series.

10.00 BBC News; Regional News; Weather.

10.25 Match of the Day 2.

11.25 The League Cup Show.

12.05 The Apprentice USA. **1.30** Weatherview. **1.35** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 Close. **6.20 Film:** Once Upon a Honeymoon. (1942) **8.15** Life in a Cottage Garden with Carol Klein. **8.45** A to Z of TV Gardening. **9.30** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.00** Live Cycling: World Track Championships. **2.05** EastEnders. (R) **4.00** The Lions' Roar. **4.30** Flog It! (R) **5.15** Restoration Home. (R)

6.15 Food & Drink. Jun Tanaka helps create the perfect burger. (R)

6.45 Ski Sunday. Graham Bell presents highlights of the women's downhill at the World Cup event in Meribel, France, while Ed Leigh reports on Britain's slopestyle hopefuls from Laax in Switzerland.

7.30 Open All Hours. Granville is left in charge of the shop. (R)

8.00 Top Gear. Jeremy Clarkson and Richard Hammond design a vehicle for elderly people, James May gets acquainted with the latest Range Rover and James McAvoy drives the Reasonably Priced Car.

9.00 Wonders of Life. Professor Brian Cox considers what makes Earth a home for life and asks what ingredients were necessary to transform this once barren planet. Last in the series.

10.00 Dancing on the Edge. Stanley is made editor of Music Express. (R)

11.05 Six Nations Rugby Union. Highlights of the third weekend of this year's competition.

11.50 Film: 10 Rillington Place. (1971) Fact-based thriller, starring Richard Attenborough.

1.40 Sign Zone: Holby City. (R) **2.40** Being Eileen. (R) **3.05** Close.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Handy Manny. **6.10** Handy Manny. **6.25** The Hive. (R) **6.35** The Hive. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan. (R) **7.00** Dino Dan. (R) **7.10** Canimals. (R) **7.20** Canimals. (R) **7.25** Bookaboo. **7.40** Matt Hatter Chronicles. (R) **8.05** Rated A for Awesome. **8.15** Rated A for Awesome. **8.30** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **8.45** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **9.00** The Aquabats Super Show. **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. **10.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.25** Dickinson's Real Deal. (R) **12.25** ITV News; Weather. **12.30 Film:** Carry On Henry. (1971) **2.15** Doc Martin. (R) **3.15** Agatha Christie's Marple. (R) **5.15** You've Been Framed! (R) **5.45** Regional Programme; Weather.

6.00 ITV News; Weather.

6.15 Dancing on Ice. The five remaining skaters get to grips with props in their routines as they battle to win places in next week's semi-final. Phillip Schofield and Christine Bleakley present. The results are at 8.30pm.

7.45 All Star Family Fortunes. With Nicola Adams and Michael Vaughan.

8.30 Dancing on Ice: The Skate Off. The two lowest-scoring couples battle it out.

9.00 Mr Selfridge. The Woolworths present Harry with some tough competition.

10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather.

10.15 Her Majesty's Prison – Aylesbury. Two-part documentary about life at the young offenders' institution. (R)

11.15 Premiership Rugby Union.

12.15 The Store. **2.15** Monk. (R) **3.00** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.20 The Hoobs. (R) **6.45** The Hoobs. (R) **7.10** Will & Grace. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.10** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.40** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **1.10** The Simpsons. (R) **1.40** The Simpsons. (R) **2.10 Film:** The Wedding Planner. (2001) **4.20** Time Team. **5.20** Deal or No Deal.

6.20 Channel 4 News.

6.50 The Political Slot. The Green Party's Natalie Bennett and Will Duckworth discuss unemployment.

6.55 4thought.tv. A rabbi who believes British Jews should learn from immigrants of other faiths.

7.00 Ottolenghi's Mediterranean Feast. New series. Chef Yotam Ottolenghi travels the southern and eastern Mediterranean to explore its cuisine. He begins his journey in Marrakech, tasting the Moroccan city's street food.

8.00 A Great British Air Disaster. The rise and fall of the De Havilland Comet.

9.00 Film: Unstoppable. (2010) Premiere. Two train operators must stop a runaway locomotive carrying toxic chemicals before it crashes. Thriller, starring Denzel Washington.

10.50 Film: Runaway Jury. (2003) Courtroom thriller, starring John Cusack and Gene Hackman.

1.10 Chris Addison: My Funniest Year. (R) **3.00** 4Funnies: Brian Gittins. (R) **3.30** Eating for Two. (R) **3.35** St Elsewhere. (R) **4.20** Deal or No Deal. (R) **5.15** Countdown. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **6.15** Fifi and the Flowertots. (R) **6.25** Bert and Ernie's Great Adventures. (R) **6.30** The Mr Men Show. (R) **6.45** Olive the Ostrich. (R) **6.50** Abby's Flying Fairy School. (R) **7.00** Roobarb and Custard Too. (R) **7.10** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **7.20** Animal Antics. (R) **7.30** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.40** City of Friends. (R) **7.50** Little Princess. (R) **8.05** The Adventures of Bottle Top Bill and His Best Friend Corky. (R) **8.20** Mio Mao. (R) **8.25** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **8.45** Rupert Bear. (R) **9.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.15** Toby's Travelling Circus. **9.30** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **9.45** Jelly Jamm. (R) **10.00** Power Rangers Samurai. (R) **10.35** Batman: The Brave and the Bold. **11.10** Disney Shorts: Bone Bandit. (R) **11.15** Looney Tunes. (R) **11.20** Once Upon a Time. (R) **12.15** Cowboy Builders. (R) **1.20 Film:** Winnie the Pooh: Springtime with Roo. (2004) **2.35 Film:** Stuart Little 2. (2002) **4.05 Film:** To Hell and Back. (1955)

6.10 Beat the Ancestors.

7.05 Film: Mosquito Squadron. (1968) Second World War drama, starring David McCallum.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Person of Interest. Reese infiltrates a smuggling ring.

10.00 Film: Saw: The Final Chapter. Premiere. Horror sequel, starring Costas Mandylor. (2010)

11.50 The Exorcist: The True Story. (R)

12.50 SuperCasino. **4.00** HouseBusters. (R) **4.25** Divine Designs. (R) **4.50** Rough Guide To. (R) **5.05** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.15** The Milkshake! Show. (R) **5.40** Thomas & Friends. (R) **5.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three

7.00 Let's Dance for Comic Relief **8.10 Film:** Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time (2010) **10.00** Being Human **11.00** People Like Us

BBC Four

7.00 The Story of British Pathe **8.00** WHAAM! Roy Lichtenstein at the Tate Modern **9.00** Madness in the Desert: Paris to Dakar Rally **10.00** Timeshift: Everybody Was Kung Fu Fighting – The Rise of Martial Arts in Britain **11.00** The Swing Thing

ITV2

3.25 Take Me Out **4.55** Take Me Out – The Gossip **5.55 Film:** Babe (1995) **7.45 Film:** Ocean's Eleven (2001) **10.00** The Only Way Is Essex **10.50 Film:** The Grudge (2004)

ITV3

3.40 Film: Forever Young (1992) **5.45** Murder, She Wrote **6.45** Agatha Christie's Poirot **8.55** An Audience with Cliff Richard **10.00 Film:** Elizabeth: The Golden Age (2007)

ITV4

3.35 Film: Morning Departure (1950) **5.45 Film:** Without a Clue (1988) **8.00** Premiership Rugby Union **9.00 Film:** Blues Brothers 2000 (1998) **11.30 Film:** The Big Lebowski (1998)

E4

5.00 Revenge **6.00** The Big Bang Theory **7.00** New Girl **8.00 Film:** Edward Scissorhands (1990) **10.05** Rude Tube **11.05** My Mad Fat Diary

Film4

2.55 Explorers (1985) **5.05** Inkheart (2008) **7.10** My Super Ex-Girlfriend (2006) **9.00** High Crimes (2002) A leading attorney fights to prove her husband's innocence after the military accuse him of killing villagers in El Salvador. Thriller, starring Ashley Judd. **11.15** Blood and Chocolate (2007)

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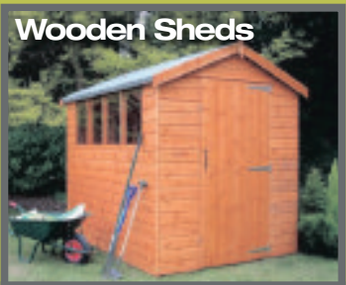

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What's On!

Film Choices

Monday
Striking Distance, Channel 5, 11pm
Cop Tom Hardy refuses to accept the suspect convicted for murdering his father is the real perpetrator of the crime. Meanwhile, his career derails and he is demoted to river patrol. However, his instincts prove accurate as the real criminal resurfaces. Thriller, starring Bruce Willis, Sarah Jessica Parker and Tom Sizemore. (1993)

Tuesday
Then She Found Me, BBC1, 12.15am
A New York teacher faces a mid-life crisis after her husband leaves her and her adoptive mother dies. To confuse matters further, she embarks on a relationship with the father of one of her students at the same time as her birth mother, an eccentric talk-show host, appears seeking reconciliation. Comedy drama, starring Helen Hunt, Bette Midler and Colin Firth. (2007)

Wednesday
The Mothman Prophecies, BBC1, 11.40pm
A bereaved journalist gets inexplicably lost on his way to Virginia, and ends up in a rural backwater where the residents are reporting paranormal encounters and sightings of strange lights. He investigates further and is startled to uncover sightings of a huge moth-like creature. Supernatural thriller, with Richard Gere, Laura Linney, Will Patton and Debra Messing. (2002)

Gladiator, Friday, ITV, 10.35pm

Thursday
Abducted, Channel 5, 3.20pm
A man wrongly imprisoned for murder is placed under the authority of a ruthless warden with political aspirations. Desperate to prove his innocence, the inmate escapes and abducts the official's wife. However, the situation takes an unexpected turn. Thriller, starring Sarah Wynter and Andrew W Walker. (2007)

Friday
Gladiator, ITV, 10.35pm
Roman general Maximus Decimus Meridius is a casualty of a power struggle between the corrupt Emperor Commodus and the senate. Ordered to be put to death along with his family, he escapes his would-be killers and is sold into slavery, only to become a gladiator and seek revenge for the murder of his wife and child. Oscar-winning period epic, with Russell Crowe, Joaquin Phoenix and Derek Jacobi. (2000)

Armageddon, BBC1, 11.20pm
Nasa discovers an asteroid the size of Texas is on a collision course with Earth, so a drilling expert is recruited to train a team of misfits to transport a nuclear device into outer space to destroy it. Sci-fi thriller, with Bruce Willis, Ben Affleck, Liv Tyler, Michael Clarke Duncan, Billy Bob Thornton and Steve Buscemi. (1998)

Pick of the Week

The boys are back with their winning formula

Bruce Forsyth has earned the title 'King of Saturday Night Telly' – after all, he's been hosting top-rated programmes at that time of the week for more than 50 years.

He's been an entertainer guaranteed to raise a smile since before many of us, and even our parents, were born thanks to hits such as The Generation Game, Big Night and, of course, his current smash Strictly Come Dancing.

A few presenters have attempted to steal his crown, including Noel Edmonds, but they've fallen by the wayside.

However, there is one duo out there that you suspect will take it one day – Ant and Dec.

Not only are they extremely good at presenting the same kind of shows as Brucie, they're excellent hosts in their own right with the kind of chemistry and charm money can't buy.

Those are facts ITV's schedulers have clearly realised because they've made Ant and Dec almost omnipresent – it sometimes feels as if barely five minutes goes by before they're back on the box.

And yes, we like them as much as the next TV expert, but we reckon we could live for at least a week without them popping up looking unnaturally chirpy.

However, we don't have to test that theory because, lo and behold, the Geordie duo are back on the box.

Those of us who grew up watching Byker Grove could never have imagined that one day, these two, then better known as PJ and Duncan, would go on to become arguably the most popular double act on British TV.

Ant and Dec were always charismatic and, in their own way, quite cute, but it seems they have that extra-special, oh-so-difficult-to-define something that has allowed them to stand head and shoulders above the crowd – despite their diminutive height.

But not everything they've touched has turned to gold. The second series of Fied or Black never broke four million viewers. So what should ultra-successful TV presenters do following a flop?

That's right, go back to an old favourite, a surefire hit. And that, it seems, is what Ant and Dec have done by resurrecting their Saturday Night Takeaway.

The last series was broadcast in 2010, but we're pleased to note that nothing seems to have changed in the intervening years – after all, why change a winning formula?

So, expect to see members of the public trying to win the items featured in the ad break, as well as star performers in action.

Robbie Williams is the first A-lister to appear. He will be providing a musical interlude as well as a surprise for one lucky member of the viewing public. While, Hollywood star Danny DeVito steps into the voiceover booth in the first edition.

Although the star guests are a welcome sight, it's the competitions that make this show so watchable – and although they could be accused of suffering from over-exposure, we're looking forward to seeing them again.

And probably again and again too because, let's face it, if they're ever going to topple Brucie, they're going to be on our screens for some years to come.

Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway, Saturday, ITV, 7pm

Best of the Rest

Monday
Penguins – Spy in the Huddle
BBC1, 9pm
Thanks to this fascinating series, we now know our emperors from our Humboldts, but could you identify individual birds? It seems it's a big ask even for penguin parents as the last episode in the series looks at the challenges faced by the young of the species. The emperor chicks keep together in a huddle and it's up to the adults to check they are feeding the right child. Meanwhile, the Humboldts are left in burrows, which may sound cosy, but they are still at risk from vampire bats. Luckily for viewers, it's not all death and trauma – there's also footage of the emperors learning to skate, and the rockhoppers practising their jumping skills.

Black Mirror
Channel 4, 10pm
Waldo, a blue bear from a children's educational TV show, teaches youngsters about the world through interviews with politicians and establishment figures. However, the animated protagonist is actually an anarchic animated character on a satirical late-night topical comedy show, voiced and controlled by failed comedian Jamie Salter (Daniel Rigby). He unleashes a mix of humorous innuendo, sarcasm and childish vitriol once he has lured someone into the studio. With a Waldo pilot in the offing, the animated character is soon standing against one of his victims, Conservative Liam Monroe (Tobias Menzies). Romance and a viral internet clip are thrown into the mix for Charlie Brooker's cross between 2012 smash Ted, and Robert Redford's 1972 drama The Candidate.

Tuesday
Shameless
Channel 4, 10pm
All good things must come to an end, and this week sees the arrival of the final series of Channel 4's hit comedy drama. The Maguires' empire seems to be doing well. While Mimi (Tina Malone) hijacks the local school via the PTA, Shane (Nicky Evans) is busy getting a new business venture off the ground. However, just as the rogue clan think things are going well, Jamie's (Aaron McCusker) shock discovery leads to him withdrawing from the family firm. Meanwhile, Frank's latest job as a caretaker helps fund his latest leisure activity involving Sherrilee (Sarah Totty) and Derrilee (Sue Vincent), a prostitute double act dubbed the Gastric Bandits.

My New Hand
BBC1, 10.35pm
Thanks to research and human ingenuity, medical science never ceases to amaze. Recently there has been the first bionic eye and face transplants – a case of science fiction becoming science fact. But the latest headline-making procedure is a hand transplant, which happened in Leeds in December. This documentary follows Professor Simon Kay and his team from making the initial decision to carry it out, through to the first time that 51-year-old Mark Cahill sees his new hand.

Shameless, Tuesday, Channel 4, 10pm

Wednesday
Child of Our Time
BBC1, 9pm
There were rumours that this fascinating insight into child development might not be returning to our screens – thankfully, they have proved unfounded. So Dr Robert Winston is back for a two-part run. This time the youngsters are 12, so since we last saw them they have started at secondary school and have begun to suffer some of the trials and tribulations involved in teenage life. The concluding part will be broadcast tomorrow, and features an insight into the children's family changes, parental expectations and what perils they may face before we meet them again in a few years' time.

Thursday
The Schoolboy Assassin: Murder Files
Channel 5, 8pm
For over a decade, Michael Ross was regarded as a hero thanks to his Iraq war service. But, in 2008, he was convicted of murdering Orkney-based waiter Shamsuddin Mahmood during an unprovoked attack in June 1994. Although a suspect almost from the start of the investigation, the only evidence at the police's disposal was circumstantial, and it wasn't until 2006 when a witness finally came forward that Ross was eventually convicted of the crime. This fascinating documentary charts events from the murder to his attempts to appeal in 2012.

Friday
Mary and Martha
BBC1, 8.30pm
Not content with being the man who gave us Blackadder, Four Weddings and a Funeral, and Love Actually, writer and director Richard Curtis also co-founded Comic Relief, and this year he's making a very special contribution in the form of this one-off drama. Granted, on paper Mary and Martha doesn't sound particularly funny, but it is a reminder of why Comic Relief exists and the causes it raises money for. Double-Oscar winner Hilary Swank stars as Mary, an American woman who meets the English Martha (Brenda Blethyn) in a remote corner of Mozambique. Despite their very different backgrounds, the women discover they are bonded by a common tragedy.

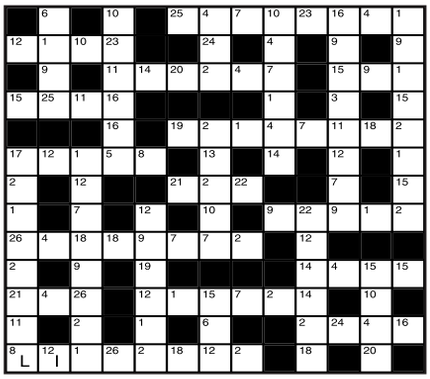
Piers Morgan's Life Stories: Lorraine Kelly
ITV, 9pm
Lorraine Kelly has been grilling celebrities and politicians for almost three decades, and has attracted no end of red-blooded admirers in the process, including JLS star Marvin Humes, who labelled her a cougar. In this show, she's responds to assorted personal questions, such as how she feels about being seen as a sex symbol. She also talks about how she was sacked from GMTV, weeks after giving birth to her daughter.

Brain Gym

No.209

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
K	C	H	E	R	S	L	D	Y	A	U	I	M
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
J	W	V	B	Z	O	P	N	X	F	Q	T	G

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Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. Not so many in the cafe we run (5)
4. Fish forced to come to land (7)
8. Doesn't move the corpse (7)
9. Make an admission (3,2)
10. Philosopher reveals hypocrisy, we hear (4)
11. What to do to get the most satisfactory trip on horseback (8)

13 and 19 Down. Screen section put back as a hatch (4-4)

14 and 17 Across. Besides a greater amount in surplus (8)

16. The end of the trip - touch down before autumn (8)
17. See 14 Across.
20. Native of Australia to leave after a row (5)
21. An appointment associated with the French evangelist (7)
22. The distinctive nature of eastern scenes, maybe (7)
23. They are characterised in an adaptation of "The Loser" (5)

Down

1. Sounding to be in favour of information the prophet should have (13)
2. Who brings endless sorrow to a husband? (5)
3. Fence the track (4)
4. A crowd by the Spanish accommodation building (6)
5. Load it in - it's needed for expansion (8)
6. External telephone connection for broad statement (7)
7. Schools that have small charges (13)
12. The result of incomplete waxing! (4-4)
13. Could they be an inclusion in temporary accommodation? (7)
15. Stick to use as an axe (6)
18. Six talk endlessly, being full of life (5)
19. See 13 Across.

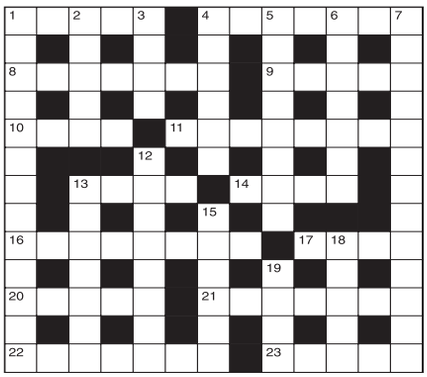
Quick Clues:

Across

1. Happen (5)
4. In addition (7)
8. Betrayer (7)
9. Zest (5)
10. Rid (4)
11. Trader (8)
13. Munch (4)
14. Let it stand (4)
16. Maintain (8)
17. Support (4)
20. Sluggish (5)
21. Disclose (7)
22. Beg (7)
23. Finished (5)

Down

1. Rusty (3-2-8)
2. Pursue (5)
3. Scold (4)
4. Trade by exchange (6)
5. Wisdom (8)
6. Far (7)
7. Lacking self-control (5-8)
12. Disparage (8)
13. Vanity (7)
15. Majestic (6)
18. Wandered (5)
19. Pain (4)



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 3 Ship-shape; 8 Upon; 9 Rehearsal; 10 Cereal; 11 Atoll; 14 Unite; 15 Dice; 16 Drill; 18 Ears; 20 Inept; 21 Serve; 24 Settle; 25 Magnolias; 26 Once; 27 Essential. Down: 1 Punctures; 2 Courtiers; 4 Heel; 5 Pleat; 6 Herald; 7 Plan; 9 Rated; 11 A time; 12 Limestone; 13 Feathered; 17 Lives; 19 Seance; 22 Valet; 23 Dais; 24 Saga. QUICK - Across: 3 Transport; 8 Espy; 9 Stretched; 10 Fleece; 11 Cycle; 14 Radio; 15 Edge; 16 Plays; 18 Thud; 20 Tacit; 21 Roost; 24 Fasten; 25 Frightful; 26 Soon; 27 Sternness. Down: 1 Perforate; 2 Splendour; 4 Rite; 5 Needy; 6 Pickle; 7 Reel; 9 Scoop; 11 Chart; 12 Education; 13 Pertinent; 17 Steal; 19 Dodger; 22 Satin; 23 Fret; 24 Fuss.

Sudoku

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

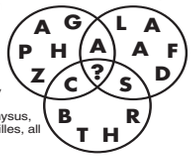
	2				7		3	6
1		7		5	3			
		9					2	
7	5		8				1	9
				1				
9	1		5		2		8	3
	3					4		
			7	8			6	5
4		5	6				9	

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

4	2	6	7	1	8	9	3	5
5	7	1	4	9	3	6	2	8
8	9	3	5	2	6	4	7	1
2	4	8	6	5	9	3	1	7
3	1	5	8	4	7	2	9	6
9	6	7	2	3	1	8	5	4
7	3	9	1	8	4	5	6	2
6	5	4	3	7	2	1	8	9
1	8	2	9	6	5	7	4	3

Circlegram

Replace the question mark with a letter so that the letters within each circle can be arranged to form words on a common theme. What are the three words, and the letter represented by the question mark?



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION: The letter represented by the question mark is I. Dionysus, Poseidon, Achilles, all Greek gods.

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Home of Property

Games room at a village home

Entertainment – a family/games room measures 24ft 4in x 12ft 7in

The detached property is luxuriously appointed throughout

The property in Bentons Lane has off-road parking and a good-sized garden to the rear

A FOUR-BED home with an en suite to the master in Bentons Lane, Great Wyrley, is for sale priced at £299,950.

Situated in a popular location close to local amenities, the property briefly comprises of four bedrooms, family room, lounge/diner, dining kitchen, utility room, luxurious family bathroom, rear garden and driveway.

On the ground floor the lounge/diner is 24ft 4in by 12ft while the family/games room – 24ft 4in by 12ft 7in – has patio doors to the rear, and there is also a cloakroom with WC and pedestal wash hand basin.

The refitted kitchen has a range of wall and base units with granite work surfaces, one and a half bowl sink, integrated dishwasher, space for range cooker and space for American-style fridge/freezer.

Bathroom

There is also a utility room with sink unit and space and plumbing for washing machine and tumble dryer.

On the first floor are the four bedrooms, en suite and family bathroom.

Call estate agent Goodchilds on (01922) 711444.

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• Three bed detached • CH & DG • Porch • Hall • Lounge • Dining • Kitchen • Bathroom • Driveway • Garage • Garden
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ARCHER ROAD, LEAMORE

REDUCED REDUCED REDUCED
• Three bed • C/H & D/G • Hall • Lounge • Dining Room • Kitchen • Outhouse/ Utility • modern Bathroom • Outside W.C. • Garden • Energy Rating C (69)
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DORA STREET, PLECK

REDUCED REDUCED REDUCED
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NEW NEW NEW NEW £450 PCM

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• One bed Flat • First Floor • Lounge Area • Kitchen Area • Bathroom • Parking Space • Energy Rating D (68)
NEW NEW NEW NEW £395 PCM

QUEENS ROAD, RUSHALL

• Two bed flat • Above Post Office • Lounge • Kitchen • Bathroom • Suit Professional • Enery Rating E (45)
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Bushbury	Well presented 2 bedroomed Semi, gas CH, sealed unit double glazing, attractive gardens
Parkfields	Commercial - office/shop premises with living accommodation over, useful yard, garage and off-road parking
Oxley	3 bedrooms, double glazing, newly installed central heating, cavity wall insulation, downstairs cloakroom
Walsall	Spacious 3 bed Mid Terraced, 2 reception, white bathroom, garden at rear
Bishopswood	Modern Link Detached, 2 reception, smart kitchen, 2 bedrooms, shower room and bathroom, double garage (tandem), gardens
Wolverhampton	Close to City Centre with lovely outlook, 3 reception, 3 beds, large bathroom, garage, gardens

Further entries invited

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Home of Property

Smart semi in Leamore

A THREE BEDROOM semi-detached house in the popular residential area of Leamore, Walsall, is for sale based on offers around £89,950.

The well-presented property in Archer Road benefits from gas central heating and double glazing with accommodation briefly comprising of enclosed porch, hall, lounge, dining room, fitted kitchen, outhouse/utility, three bedrooms, family bathroom and outside WC.

Integral

On the ground floor the lounge is 15ft 11in by 9ft 10in, while the dining room measures 13ft 9in by 11ft and leads to the kitche.

The kitchenh has a range of wall and base units with roll-edge work surfaces, stainless steel sink and drainer with mixer tap, integral electric cooker and hob with cooker hood over, while the outhouse/utility has plumbing for a washing machine and space for dryer and fridge freezer.

On the first floor are three bedrooms and a bathroom with panelled bath with shower, WC and vanity wash hand basin.

Outside to the front is a lawn while the rear garden has a paved patio leading to raised decking and gravel area and lawn.

Call Henderson Hynes on 01922 627100.

Situated in the Leamore area of north Walsall, this semi-detached has three bedrooms and a paved patio

The smart lounge measures 15ft 11in x 9ft 10in

The property features a contemporary bathroom

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Lot 5 Glebe Farm Community Centre, Glebe Farm Road, Stechford, Birmingham ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 6 27-29 Weather Oaks, Harborne, Birmingham ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 7 Lea Hall Centre, 239 Lea Hall Road, Stechford, Birmingham ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 8 Mulberry House, 37 Park Hill, Moseley, Birmingham ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 9 Druids Meadow Elderley Persons Home 6 Manningford Road, Maypole, West Midlands ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 10 Hurstway Former Carehome, 142 The Hurstway, Erdington, Birmingham ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 11 34 Pedmore Walk, Oldbury, West Midlands ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 12 Freedom Hall, Jervoise Street, West Bromwich ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 13 Uplands Cemetery Lodge, Manor Road, Smethwick, West Midlands ... Residential Vacant
Lot 14 Land at Rabone Lane, Smethwick, West Midlands ... Land
Lot 15 Land at Corner of Hargate Lane & Gladstone Street, West Bromwich ... Land
Lot 16 Land Adjoining 102 Hargate Lane, West Bromwich ... NOT BEING OFFERED Land
Lot 17 The Greyhound, 20 Bargates, Whitchurch, Shropshire ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 17a The Hollybush, Main Street, Netherseal, Swadlincote, Derbyshire ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 17b The Railway Inn, Peasehill Road, Ripley, Derbyshire ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 18 The Royal Oak, Cotmanhay Road, Cotmanhay, Ilkeston, Derbyshire ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 18a The Bulls Head, St. Johns Street, Nertherton, Dudley ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 18b The Brewery Tap, 50 Lowesmoor, Worcester ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 18c The Alma, George Street, Newcastle under Lyme ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 19 The Rectory, 2 Rectory Lane, Castle Bromwich, Birmingham ... Residential Vacant
Lot 20 The Spread Eagle, 1 High Street, Cottingham, Market Harborough ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 21 The Prince of Wales, 101 Harborough Road, Northampton ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 22 20 Broadmeadow Green, Wolverhampton ... Residential Vacant
Lot 23 Land off Henwood Lane, Catherine de Barnes ... Land
Lot 24 240-242 Slade Road, Erdington, Birmingham ... Commercial Investment
Lot 25 244 Slade Road, Erdington, Birmingham ... Commercial Investment
Lot 26 72 Ashley Street, Bilston ... Residential Vacant
Lot 27 44 Vera Road, Yardley, Birmingham ... Residential Vacant
Lot 28 593 Birmingham New Road, Bilston ... Residential Vacant
Lot 29 The Rose & Crown, 52 Market Street, Draycott, Derbyshire ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 30 The Country Girl, Sharpway Gate, Stoke Prior, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 31 Land R/o 144/146 Alcester Road & Adj. R/o Woodbridge Road & Freehold Ground Rent of 144 & 146 Alcester Road & 4 Woodbridge Road, Moseley, Birmingham ... Land/Ground Rent
Lot 32 11 Barnett Road, Willenhall ... Residential Vacant
Lot 33 46 Carter Road Wolverhampton ... Residential Vacant
Lot 34 80 Pikehelve Street, West Bromwich ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 35 22 Essex Street, Walsall ... Residential Vacant
Lot 36 157 Brookvale Park Road, Erdington, Birmingham ... Residential Vacant
Lot 37 7 Alcester Street, Redditch ... Commercial Investment
Lot 38 24 High Street, Erdington, Birmingham ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 39 The Park Inn, 74 Park Road, Burslem, Stoke on Trent ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 40 The Trafalgar Inn, 200 Waterloo Street, Burton on Trent ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 41 The Malt Shovel, 131 Willenhall Road, Wolverhampton ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 42 The Clement Arms, 30 Coventry Road, Small Heath, Birmingham ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 43 3 Hamilton Court, 165 Northfield Road, Kings Norton, Birmingham ... Residential Vacant
Lot 44 4 Colton Square, Leicester ... Residential Investment
Lot 45 23 Colton Square, Leicester ... Residential Investment
Lot 46 Land at Saredon Mill, Hatherton, Cannock ... Land
Lot 47 Unit A & B Zenith Building, 26 Colton Street, Leicester ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 48 49 Mission Drive, Tipton ... Residential Vacant
Lot 49 2 Glenthorne Road, Erdington, Birmingham ... Residential Vacant
Lot 50 Land at Alexandra Street & 33 Edward Street, Dudley ... Land
Lot 51 24 Hart Road, Wednesfield ... Residential Investment
Lot 52 The Queens Head, Sugar Brook Lane, Stoke Pound Bromsgrove, Worcestershire ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 53 The Kings Head, 92 East Street, Fritwell, Bicester ... SOLD PRIOR Commercial Vacant
Lot 54 28 Middleton Road, Kidderminster ... Residential Vacant
Lot 55 126 Chipperfield Road, Castle Bromwich, Birmingham Ground ... Rent
Lot 56 56 Woodfield Crescent, Sparkbrook, Birmingham Ground ... Rent
Lot 57 151 Turfpits Lane, Erdington, Birmingham Ground ... Rent
Lot 58 458 College Road, Kingstanding, Birmingham Commercial Ground ... Rent
Lot 59 460 College Road, Kingstanding, Birmingham Commercial Ground ... Rent
Lot 60 466 College Road, Kingstanding, Birmingham Commercial Ground ... Rent
Lot 61 Garages 13, 14 & 15 William Court,, 70-72 Alcester Road, Moseley, Birmingham Garages
Lot 62 1 Elms Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands ... Residential Vacant
Lot 63 12 Hilton Road, Lanesfield, Wolverhampton ... Residential Vacant
Lot 64 20 Great Bridge Road, Bilston ... Residential Vacant
Lot 65 13 Shaw Road, Tipton ... Residential Vacant
Lot 66 324 Wolverhampton Road, Walsall ... Residential Vacant
Lot 67 169 Green Lawns, Tipton ... Residential Investment
Lot 68 Jubilee House, Boatmans Lane, Brownhills ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 69 Land Corner of Hospital Lane & Masons Street, Coseley ... NOT BEING OFFERED ... Land
Lot 70 171 Park Lane, Wednesbury ... Residential Vacant
Lot 71 28 Florence Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham ... Residential Vacant
Lot 72 6 Vicarage Grove, Acocks Green, Birmingham ... Residential Vacant
Lot 73 The Former GWRSA Club, Tolladine Road, Worcester ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 74 20 Cheltenham Grove, Newcastle under Lyme ... Residential Vacant
Lot 75 Land Adj. 20 Cheltenham Grove, Newcastle under Lyme ... NOT BEING OFFERED ... Land
Lot 76 27 Harcourt Road, Kibworth, Leicester ... Residential Investment
Lot 77 9 Morrison Avenue, Wolverhampton ... Residential Investment
Lot 78 The Lodge, Trinity Street, Leamington Spa ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 79 426-430 Garrison Lane, Bordesley Green, B-ham ... SOLD PRIOR Commercial Vacant
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Lot 84 69 Aston Road North, Aston, Birmingham ... Commercial Vacant
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Lot 86 9 Brades Road, Oldbury, West Midlands ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 87 1 Hart Road, Wednesfield ... Residential Investment
Lot 88 14 Hart Road, Wednesfield ... Residential Investment
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Lot 90 39 North Street, Dudley ... Residential Investment
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Lot 92 99 Neachells Lane, Wednesfield ... Residential Investment
Lot 93 32 Brackleys Way, Solihull, West Midlands ... Residential Vacant
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Lot 95 32 Newbolt Road, Bilston ... Residential Vacant
Lot 96 Land Adj. The Coppice, Newport Road, Codsall ... Land
Lot 97 Land 24i Portway Hill, Rowley Regis ... Land
Lot 98 Strategic Land off Kennford Road, Rowley Regis ... Land
Lot 99 Land R/o 4-24 Upper Ettingshall Road, Coseley ... Land
Lot 100 112 Albert Road, Stechford, Birmingham ... Residential Vacant
Lot 101 5 Oaken Drive, Willenhall ... Residential Investment
Lot 102 24 Winchester Drive, Wednesfield ... Residential Investment
Lot 103 24 Miller Crescent, Bilston ... Residential Vacant
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Lot 105 18 Windsor Road, Parkfields, Wolverhampton ... Residential Vacant
Lot 106 27 Hall Lane, Coseley ... Residential Vacant
Lot 107 Barford Road Members Club, Barford Road, Ladywood, Birmingham ... Commercial Vacant
Lot 108 39 Fowey Road, Hodge Hill, Birmingham ... Residential Vacant
Lot 109 12 Campbell Close, Walsall ... Residential Vacant
Lot 110 35 Furlong Lane, Halesowen, West Midlands ... Residential Vacant
Lot 111 100 Upper Meadow Road, Quinton, West Midlands ... Residential Vacant
Lot 112 53 Wensleydale Road, Perry Barr, Birmingham ... Residential Vacant
Lot 113 55 Albert Road, Wolverhampton ... Residential Vacant
Lot 114 20 Station Street, Tipton ... Residential Vacant
Lot 115 18 Glaisdale Gardens, Wolverhampton ... Residential Vacant
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Lot 118 98 Beeches Road, Great Barr, Birmingham ... Residential Vacant
Lot 119 46A Perry Park Road, Rowley Regis ... Residential Vacant
Lot 120 70 Crawford Street, Saltley, Birmingham ... Residential Vacant
Lot 121 110 Delph Road, Brierley Hill ... SOLD PRIOR ... Residential Vacant
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Lot 123 29 Gracemere Crescent, Hall Green, Birmingham ... Residential Vacant
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Home of Property

Go hell for leather in your lounge revamp

NOW could be the time to reinvent your living space and attempt to brighten up the rooms of their homes with some renovation.

Whether it's something as small as opting for brighter curtains, or a wholesale change with everything from carpets to ceilings altered, there is nothing to symbolise a fresh start like some redecoration.

Home experts have established a whole raft of interior design trends for the coming months, with nods to eras gone by as well as a futuristic feel.

Some can be achieved by adding a few gadgets or decorative pieces, and some will need walls stripped and furniture swapped; either way, following this guide will ensure an on-trend living space which will be in style for years to come.

Leather Sofas Online has come up with some suggestions for how you could change your room.

Mid-Century Modern

There are a few key approaches to this impressive look, and when they are done correctly, they create a room which is charming and stylised.

Sharp-angled furniture which combines rich upholstery and warm-coloured wood is an important aspect; if opting for a genuine leather sofa, ensure that the colour of the leather is played down and neutral, whereas fabric sofas can be matched to the colour of wallpaper with ease to make sure that they aren't too prominent and loud.

Angles are important to this look, so furniture, walls and architecture with sleek lines will be key pieces; the hard and angled edges can be softened with cushions and rugs for a more homely feel.

Patriotic sitting . . . a true Best of Britain sofa from Leather Sofas Online

Back To The 70s

The 70s may not have been hailed as one of the great decades in interior design history, but the unmistakeable style is back with a bang this year.

Sideboards, panelled walls and shag piles are all huge news in furnishing a living space, though choosing this look requires careful thought and planning.

The loud patterns and clashing fabrics that the look demands blend perfectly together when done properly.

The trend can be given a modern twist by opting for Swedish-inspired prints on the walls and using large floral prints across one feature wall.

Lovely in Lace

Fresh off the catwalks of New York, Paris and Milan, lace is becoming a hit in the living room. Adding a lacy undertone to a room can give a real edge of sophistication and ladylike decadence.

The beauty of this trend is that it doesn't require wholesale changes; lace cushions or curtains can make the room feel quaintly old-fashioned and give a Georgian ambience, while touches such as lace window films and lustrous rugs with a lace effect are strikingly modern.

Combining delicate lace with a strong real leather sofa can create a pleasing contrast.

Viva la Renaissance!

The word 'Renaissance' is synonymous with decadence; the court of Versailles' wonderfully ornate furnishings and Louis XIV's opulent robes in deep jewelled colours stand out as the strongest images of the age. Now the look comes to home interiors.

French Renaissance style is different from that of Italians'; it favours beauty over function, and is definitely not a trend that should be attempted by those on a strict budget.

To see the entire range of real leather sofas from Leather Sofas Online visit http://www.leathersofasonline.co.uk

WILLENHALL
RAVENSCROFT ROAD
- Spendid detached property
- Considerable improved
- Three bedrooms & loft room
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- Gas C/heating & D/glazing
- Bathroom with jacuzzi style bath
- Garden, garage & off road parking
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WEDNESBURY
DEVON ROAD
- Semi detached house
- Popular location
- Spacious lounge
- Fitted kitchen with some appliances
- Two bedrooms
- Bathroom with separate WC
- Centrally heated
- Energy Performance Rating E

WILLENHALL
BARNETT ROAD

- Traditional style end terraced
- Three bedrooms
- Fitted kitchen
- Ground floor bathroom

- Double glazing & Gas c/heating
- Rear garden
- Off road parking
- Energy Rating 'D'

£500 PCM

WILLENHALL
TYLER ROAD

- Mid terrace property
- Three bedrooms
- Fully fitted kitchen
- Bathroom with shower over

- Gas CH & Double glazing
- Garden to rear
- Off road paring
- Energy Rating 'D'

£450 PCM

WILLENHALL
ROBINSONS GIPSY LANE

- Attractive detached bungalow
- Two bedrooms
- Fitted kitchen
- Bathroom and shower room

- Central heated throughout
- Garden & off road parking
- Unfurnished
- Energy Rating 'E'

£450 PCM

WEDNESBURY
BROOKSIDE
- Attractive first floor appartment
- Two bedrooms
- Fitted kitchen with oven, hob and extractor
- Lounge
- bathroom with shower
- Communal garden
- Energy Rating 'D'

£450 PCM

WILLENHALL
KEATS ROAD

- First floor two bed apartment
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- Kitchen with cooker
- Bathroom with shower

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- Energy Rating 'C'
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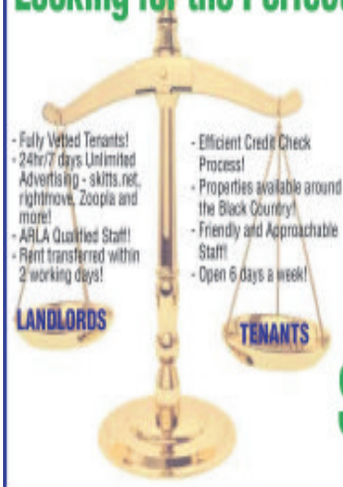

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Home of Property

Bartlams is handling the sale of this detached in Trysull Road, Merry Hill, Wolverhampton

Detached on for £209,950

A THREE BEDROOM detached house in Trysull Road, Merry Hill, Wolverhampton is for sale with no upward chain priced at offers around £209,950.

The individually designed property has two interlinking living rooms plus a superb 19ft garden room, kitchen with integrated appliances, built-in wardrobes in all three bedrooms, bathroom, gas central heating and double glazing.

On the ground floor the lounge, 14ft by 12ft 9in, has a Minster-style stone feature fireplace with living flame gas fire and opening onto a dining room which is 9ft 6in by 8ft 7in and with French window to the garden room.

Built-in

The kitchen, 10ft 10in by 9ft 10in, has a range of floor-based cupboards, integrated oven with four-plate hob and extractor canopy, built-in refrigerator and automatic dishwasher and plumbing for automatic washing machine.

On the first floor are three bedrooms and a bathroom with white suite comprising corner bath, pedestal wash hand basin and WC.

Outside to the front is a parking area with a side driveway to a garage, while the rear garden is laid mainly to lawn with shrub borders and hedging.

Call Bartlams on 01902 773322.

The kitchen has matching wall and base units, built-in oven, hob and a number of appliances, plus space and plumbing for an automatic washing machine

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52 Peach Road Willenhall WV12 5UW. We are acting for the mortgagees and have received an offer of £68,000 on the above property. Any interested parties must submit any higher offers in writing to the selling agent before an exchange of contracts takes place.□

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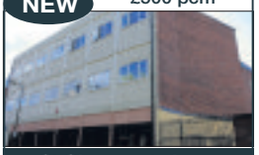

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- Secure parking

NEW £450 pcm

Cecil Street

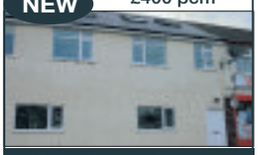
- A Re-furbished 2bed mid terrace
- 2 Good size reception rooms
- A splendid fitted kitchen with cooker
- Downstairs family bathroom
- Double glazing and gas central heating
- Fully enclosed rear garden, Dss accepted

NEW £425 pcm

Broadstone Avenue,

- A re-furbished 1bed 1st floor apartment
- Good size open planned lounge/kitchen
- New fitted kitchen with cooker
- Superb bathroom with shower over bath
- Gas central heating and Double glazing
- Neutal decor and laminate flooring

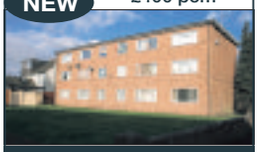
NEW £400 pcm



Broadstone Avenue,

- A re-furbished 1bed 1st floor apartment
- A superb open planned lounge/kitchen
- New fitted kitchen with cooker
- Bathroom with shower over bath
- Gas central heating and Double glazing
- Neutral decor and laminate flooring

NEW £400 pcm



Laburnham House

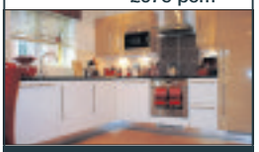
- One bed ground floor apartment
- Good sized reception room
- Modern fitted kitchen with cooker
- Family bathroom with shower over bath
- Gas central heating and double glazing
- Neutral decor throughout

£675cm

Mellish Park, Walsall

- A luxury 2 bed 2nd floor apartment
- Open planned lounge/kitchen area
- Modern kitchen with appliancies
- Superb family bathroom with shower
- Master en suite
- Gouble Glazing and secure Parking

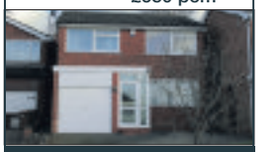
£675 pcm



Mellish Park

- A luxury 2 bed ground floor apartment
- Open planned lounge/kitchen
- Modern kitchen with integral appliances
- Designer bathroom and en-suite
- Double Glazing throughout
- Allocated secure parking

£650 pcm



Launceston Close

- A splendid 3bed detached property
- A spacious lounge with feature fire place
- Modern fitted kitchen with cooker
- Upstairs family bathroom with bath and shower
- Gas central heating and Double glazing
- Integral garage and a fully enclosed rear garden

£650 pcm

The Crescent

- A superb 4bed semi detached
- 2 Spacious reception rooms
- Traditional kitchen with cooker
- Upastirs family bathroom with shower
- Gas central heating and Double glazing
- Driveway for 2 cars and utility area

£650 pcm

Woodside Road

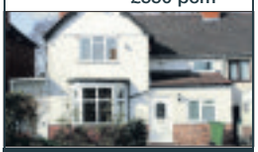
- A superb 3bed detached property
- 2 Spacious reception rooms
- Fitted kitchen with gas cooker
- Upastirs family bathroom and downstairs WC
- Gas central heating and Double glazing
- Fully enclosed rear garden, viewing reccommended

£600 pcm

Tasker Street, Walsall

- A 5 double bedroom terraced property
- Consists of 2 large reception rooms
- Fitted kitchen with units
- Downstairs family bathroom
- Gas central heating and double glazing
- DSS accepted and a large rear garden

£550 pcm



Walhouse Road

- A traditional 3bed semi detached property
- 2 Spacious laminated reception rooms
- A pleasent modern fitted kitchen
- Upstairs family bathroom
- Gas central heating and Double glazing
- Dss accepted, Rear garden and Driveway

£495 pcm

Wenlock Gardens

- A 3bed semi detached property
- 1 Spacious reception room
- A good size modern fitted kitchen
- A pleasent upstairs family bathroom
- Gas central heating throughout
- Dss accepted with a guarantor

£525 pcm

Bath Road

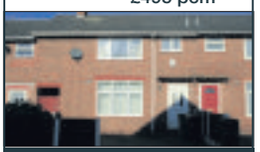
- A traditional 3 bed mid terrace
- 2 spacious reception rooms
- Modern fitted kitchen with cooker
- Downstairs family bathroom
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- DSS accepted

£495 pcm

Fountains Road

- A refurbished 3bed mid terrace property
- 1 Spacious reception room
- Modern fitted kitchen with cooker
- Upstairs family bathroom
- Gas central heating and Double glazing
- Dss accepted and Utility room

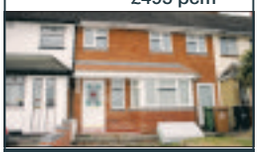
£495 pcm



Reeves Street

- A superb 3bed newly decorated property
- A good size reception room
- A splendid modern fitted kitchen with cooker
- A pleasent upstairs family bathroom
- Gas central heating and Double glazing
- Dss accepted, Driveway and Rear garden

£495 pcm



Abbey Square, Bloxwich

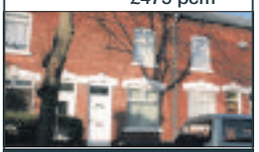
- A 3 bed mid terrace property
- 1 spacious reception room
- Fitted family kitchen/diner
- Upstairs bathroom with seperate WC
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- DSS accepted

£495 pcm

Selbourne Close

- A 3bed spacious mid-terrace
- 2 Spacious reception rooms
- A modern fitted kitchen
- Superb upstairs family bathroom
- Gas central heating and Double glazing
- Fully enclosed rear garden

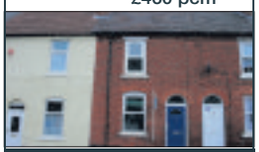
£475 pcm



Scarborough Road

- A recently re-furbished 2 bed mid terrace
- 2 spacious reception rooms
- Modern fitted kitchen with cooker
- Upstairs bathroom with seperate shower
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- DSS accepted

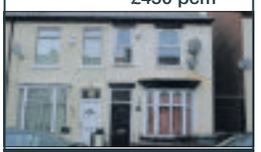
£460 pcm



Brace Street

- A fully re-furbished 2 bed terrace
- 2 spacious reception rooms
- Modern fitted kitchen with cooker
- New upstairs bathroom with shower
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- DSS accepted

£450 pcm



Kingsley Street

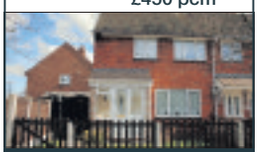
- A traditional 2 bed mid terrace property
- 2 spacious reception rooms
- Modern fitted kitchen with cooker
- Upstairs bathroom with seperate shower
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- DSS accepted

£450 pcm

Dora Street

- A 3 bed mid terrace property
- Spacious through lounge
- Modern fitted kitchen
- Downstairs family bathroom
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- DSS accepted

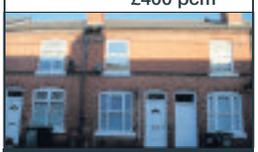
£450 pcm



Glastonbury Crescent

- A pleasent 2bed end terrace property
- 2 Spacious reception rooms
- A fitted kitchen with new cooker
- A good size upstairs family bathroom
- Gas central heating and Double glazing
- Dss accepted, fore and rear garden

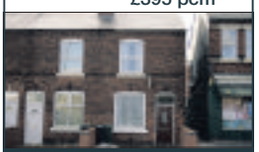
£400 pcm



Prince street

- An excellent 3bed mid terrace property
- 2 Spacious reception rooms
- A superb kitchen with cooker
- A new downstairs family bathroom
- Gas central heating and double glazing
- Dss Accepted, Guest WC

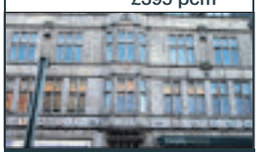
£395 pcm



Darlaston Road

- A traditional 3 bed end terrace property
- 2 spacious reception rooms
- Modern fitted kitchen
- Downstairs family bathroom
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- DSS accepted, rent in arears for HB

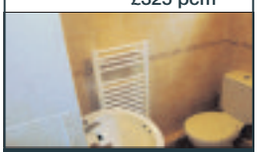
£395 pcm



Tudor House

- 1 Bed first floor apartment
- Town centre location
- Spacious lounge
- Modern fitted kitchen
- Modern bathroom
- Dss accepted with guarantor

£325 pcm



Austin House, Netherton

- 1 Bed 1st floor apartment
- 1 Spacious reception room
- A modern fitted kitchen with cooker
- A pleasent bathroom with white suite
- Double glazing throughout
- Rear garden

£325 pcm

Ablewell Street, Walsall

- A 2nd floor apartment
- 1/2 bedrooms divided by opening doors
- A spacious lounge
- Pleasant family bathroom
- Modern fitted Kitchen
- Single glazed and gas central heating

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FEATURED PROPERTY

COPPICE FARM
BUTTERMERE GROVE

- Superb extended five bedroom modern detached property
- Two reception rooms • Office/occasional bed 6
- Conservatory • Breakfast kitchen
- En-suite shower room • Excellent fitted bathroom
- Energy Rating C

WAS £289,950, NOW £279,950 OFFERS, VIEWING ESSENTIAL

PROPERTY OF THE WEEK

WILLENHALL
BILSTON ROAD

- Pleasantly appointed detached property
- Gas central heating, double glazing • Lounge • Dining room
- Refitted kitchen • Four bedrooms, three with fitted wardrobes
- Potential to extend to rear (subject to planning)
- Off road parking • Energy Rating 'E'

WAS £175,000 NOW £169,950

MANAGERS CHOICE

SHORT HEATH
POOLES LANE

- Much improved three bedroom detached bungalow
- Lounge • Superb breakfast kitchen, Utility
- Double glazing, gas central heating
- Spacious bathroom • Garage & driveway
- Established rear gardens • Energy Rating 'E'

£195,000

FREE MARKET APPRAISALS - Call us now on 01902 631151

NEW

NEW INVENTION
MOXHULL CLOSE

- Well presented and terraced property
- Three bedrooms • Lounge • Spacious dining kitchen
- Gas central heating • Double glazing
- Bathroom • Rear garden and summer house/playroom
- Energy Rating 'TBC'

£122,950

NEW

WILLENHALL
ST ANNES ROAD

- Superb and much improved extended and terraced property
- Two reception rooms • Excellent spacious dining kitchen
- Summer house/gym • Three bedrooms • Attic room • Large bathroom
- Gas central heating • Double glazing
- Garage • Energy Rating 'TBC'

£120,000

NEW

NEW INVENTION
JONES ROAD

- Traditional style semi detached property
- Lounge and dining room • Fitted kitchen
- Two good size bedrooms • Refitted bathroom
- Double glazing • Gas central heating
- Front and rear gardens • Energy Rating 'TBC'

£95,000

NEW

WILLENHALL
TYLER ROAD

- Improved traditional style mid terraced property
- Lounge • Refitted dining kitchen
- Downstairs wc • Three bedrooms
- Double glazing, gas central heating
- Driveway • Rear garden • Energy Rating 'D'

£82,000 NO CHAIN

NEW INVENTION
ESSINGTON ROAD

- Brand new development of two detached bungalows
- Two bedrooms and Fitted Bathroom
- Rear garden • Garage in Separate Block
- Spacious Living Room & Dining Area • Fitted Kitchen
- Gas Central Heating, Double Glazed Windows

£169,995 PART EXCHANGE CONSIDERED

NEW INVENTION
GLAMIS ROAD

- Pleasantly appointed link detached property
- Three bedrooms • Gas central heating, UPVC double glazed windows
- Two reception rooms • Fitted kitchen
- Bathroom with shower • 28ft side garage
- Established garden • Energy Rating 'C'

OFFERS IN EXCESS OF £160,000

SUMMER HAYES
FENN RISE

- Spacious link detached bungalow
- Extended to the side elevation
- Three bedrooms & dressing room
- Majority triple glazing, gas central heating
- 32ft double length garage, rear garden • Energy Rating 'D'

WAS £154,950, NOW £150,000

WILLENHALL
ALTON AVENUE

- Three bedroom double fronted traditional style semi detached property
- Two reception rooms • Fitted breakfast kitchen including oven & hob
- Utility room & downstairs wc, fitted shower room
- Gas central heating & UPVC double glazed windows
- Garage & driveway • Generous rear garden • Energy Rating 'D'

WAS £148,995, NOW £144,950 NO CHAIN

SNEYD PARK
CEDAR PARK ROAD

- Pleasantly appointed semi detached property
- Three bedrooms • Gas central heating, UPVC double glazing
- Lounge and dining rooms • Fitted kitchen
- Refitted bathroom with white suite
- Garage/carport • Energy Rating 'D'

£139,950

WILLENHALL
ALBION STREET

- Superb end terraced property
- Spacious lounge • Dining kitchen
- Three bedrooms • Double glazing • Gas central heating
- Garage, driveway • Viewing recommended
- Energy Rating 'TBC'

£139,000 NO CHAIN

OFF OVERDALE DRIVE, WALSALL
CONDOVER CLOSE

- Pleasantly appointed semi detached property
- Three bedrooms • Gas central heating • UPVC double glazed windows
- Two reception rooms • Fitted kitchen & utility room/study
- Upstairs bathroom with shower • Enclosed rear garden • Energy Rating 'D'

WAS £139,950, NOW £137,500 NO CHAIN

SHORT HEATH
POOLES LANE

- Extended semi detached property
- Three bedrooms • Gas central heating • UPVC double glazed windows
- Two reception rooms • Breakfast kitchen
- Generous rear garden • Block paved driveway • Energy Rating 'D'

£120,000 OFFERS, VIEWING RECOMMENDED

WILLENHALL
HILL ROAD

- Much improved extended three bedroom property
- Lounge and extended dining room • Fitted breakfast kitchen
- Bathroom with shower • Garage and block paved driveway
- Gas central heating • UPVC double glazed windows
- Viewing recommended • Energy Performance Rating 'E'

£115,000

WILLENHALL
SQUIRES GROVE

- Superb Coach House apartment
- Lounge with dining area • Impressive kitchen
- Two excellent size bedrooms • Bathroom
- Gas central heating • Double glazing
- Gym/office/converted garage • Parking • Energy Rating 'TBC'

£110,500 NO CHAIN

DARLASTON
MEMORY LANE

- Well presented modern style semi detached property
- Lounge • Dining kitchen • Refitted bathroom
- Two bedrooms • Storage heating • Double glazing
- 23ft garage, garden to the rear • Energy Rating 'D'

£99,950

WILLENHALL
PACKWOOD CLOSE

- Excellent modern style semi
- Planning permission granted for side extension
- Two bedrooms • UPVC double glazed windows
- Fitted bathroom with shower • Pleasant 13ft front lounge
- Enclosed rear garden • Energy Rating 'D'

OFFERS IN EXCESS OF £96,000

WILLENHALL
VICTORIA COURT, GRANVILLE STREET

- Superbly appointed ground floor corner apartment
- Two bedrooms, one with fitted wardrobes
- Open plan lounge/dining kitchen
- Spacious bathroom
- Allocated parking space with security gates

£87,500 NO CHAIN

COPPICE FARM
COTSWOLD GROVE

- Spacious ground floor flat
- Two double bedrooms • Large lounge, kitchen
- Parking to the fore • Storage heating
- DEVELOPMENT FOR THE OVER 55's
- Communal gardens • No Chain • Energy Rating 'D'

£75,000 FOR 70% SHARED OWNERSHIP

WILLENHALL
- Superb spacious modern end town house
- Three/four bedrooms, two with en-suites
- Gas central heating, UPVC double glazing

£154,995 OFFERS

COPPICE FARM
- Pleasantly appointed modern style link detached
- Three bedrooms, master with fitted wardrobes
- UPVC double glazing, gas fired central heating

NOW OFFERS IN EXCESS OF £140,000

WILLENHALL
- Modern style end town house
- Two bedrooms • Lounge • Dining Kitchen
- Gas central heating • Double glazing

£125,000

NEW INVENTION
- Pleasant extended semi detached property
- Three bedrooms • Gas central heating
- UPVC double glazed windows • Lounge and dining rooms

NOW £124,950 OFFERS

WILLENHALL
- Pleasant semi detached property
- Three bedrooms • Gas central heating system
- UPVC double glazed windows • Two reception rooms

WAS £120,000, NOW £118,500

BENTLEY, WALSALL
- Pleasant extended semi detached property
- Three bedrooms • Gas central heating system
- UPVC d/glazed windows • Spacious 19ft through lounge

£110,000 OFFERS

BENTLEY
- Extended traditional style semi detached property
- Two reception rooms • Three bedrooms • Bathroom
- Double glazed windows • Gas central heating

WAS £109,950, NOW £107,000 NO CHAIN

WILLENHALL
- Spacious Victorian style end terraced property
- Two bedrooms • Upstairs bathroom • Two reception rooms
- Kitchen • Gas c/heating • Part UPVC d/glazed windows

£86,000 NO CHAIN

WILLENHALL
- Spacious end terraced property
- Two bedrooms • Gas central heating
- Part UPVC double glazed windows

OFFERS OVER £80,000 IDEAL FIRST TIME

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Bloxwich
Vernon Way

- Two/Three Bed Detached Bungalow
- One/Two Reception Rooms
- Fitted Kitchen
- Bedroom with En-Suite
- Shower Room
- Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating

£695 PCM

Bloxwich
Grantown Grove

- Two Bedroom End of Terrace
- Furnished
- Lounge
- Fitted Kitchen/Diner
- Conservatory
- Family Bathroom
- Front Garden
- Off Road Parking
- Enclosed Rear Garden
- Sorry No DHSS, Pets or Smokers.

£625 PCM

Walsall
Waverley Road

- Three Bedroom Terrace
- One Reception room
- Fitted Kitchen
- Family Bathroom
- Off Road Parking
- DHSS Accepted

£495 PCM

Bloxwich
Hollemeadow Avenue

- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Lounge
- Kitchen
- Ground Floor Bathroom
- First Floor Family Bathroom
- Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating
- Front & Rear Gardens
- Block Paved Driveway

£495 PCM

Walsall
Blackthorne Road

- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Lounge
- Kitchen
- Family Bathroom
- Part Central Heated
- Double Glazing
- Off Road Parking
- Front & Rear Gardens
- Sorry No DHSS

£475 PCM

Walsall
Mellish Court

- Two Bedroom Top Floor Flat
- Lounge with Laminate Flooring
- Kitchen
- Bathroom
- Entrance Hallway
- Garage
- Allocated Parking Space
- Sorry No DHSS

£475 PCM

Walsall
Tanners Court

- Two bedroom apartments
- Lounge
- Kitchen
- Bathroom
- Master Bedroom with Ensuite
- Sorry No DHSS

From £475 PCM

Bloxwich
Booth Street

- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Lounge
- Kitchen
- Cloakroom W.C.
- Shower Room
- Front & Rear Gardens
- Off Road Parking
- DHSS Accepted

£450 PCM

Bloxwich
Nursery Road

- Three Bedrooms Semi
- Lounge
- Kitchen
- Family Bathroom
- Downstairs W.C.
- Front and Rear Gardens
- Off Road Parking
- DHSS Accepted

£450 PCM

Walker Road
Blakenall Heath

- Two Bedroom Apartment
- Lounge/Kitchen
- Family Bathroom
- Gas Central Heating
- Double Glazing
- DHSS Accepted

£450 PCM

Bloxwich
High Street

- One Bedroom Flat
- Large Lounge
- Kitchen
- Large Bathroom
- Double Glazing
- Electric Heating
- Off Road Parking
- DHSS Accepted

£400 PCM

Bloxwich
Foster Street

- Two Bedroom Terrace
- Two Reception Rooms
- Family Bathroom
- Gas Central Heating
- Double Glazing
- Rear Garden
- DHSS Accepted
- Council Tax Band: band A

£400 PCM

Bloxwich
High Street

- Two Bedroom Flat
- Bloxwich High St Location
- Lounge
- Kitchen
- Bathroom
- Stairs to Second Bedroom
- Off Road Parking
- DHSS Accepted

£400 PCM

Bloxwich
Field Road

- One Bedroom Flat
- Kitchen
- Bathroom
- Central Heating
- Double Glazing
- Sorry No DHSS

£375 PCM

Willenhall
Market Place

- One Bedroom
- Lounge
- Modern Fitted Kitchen
- Modern Bathroom
- Gas Central Heating
- DHSS Accepted

£375 PCM

Bloxwich
High Street

- One Bedroom Flat
- Lounge
- Shower Room
- Kitchen
- Electric Heating
- Double Glazing
- Parking Space To Rear
- DHSS Accepted

£375 PCM

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Goodchilds
Estate Agents & Lettings

Walsall
Sneyd Lane

- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Lounge
- Dining Room
- Family Bathroom
- Double Glazing
- Central Heating
- Sorry No DHSS

£525 PCM

Walsall
Telford Road

- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Entrance Hall
- Lounge
- Kitchen
- Shower Room
- Front & Rear Gardens
- Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating
- Sorry no DHSS Pets or Smokers

£525 PCM

Walsall
Harness Close

- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Lounge
- Kitchen
- Family Bathroom
- Gardens
- No Pets or Smokers
- Garage & Off Road Parking
- Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating

£525 PCM

Walsall
Stafford Street

- Three Bedroom Detached
- Two Reception Rooms
- Kitchen
- Bathroom
- Garage
- DHSS Accepted

£495 PCM

Bloxwich
Blakenall Lane

- Two Bedroom Mid-Terrace
- Kitchen
- Two Reception Rooms
- New Ground Floor Bathroom
- Further Room with W.C & Wash Basin
- Gardens
- DHSS Considered

£475 PCM

Bloxwich
Signal Grove

- Two Bedroom Mews Property
- Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating
- Fitted Kitchen
- Master Bedroom with built in wardrobe
- Family Bathroom
- Decked Patio Area
- Allocated Parking for 2 Cars
- Sorry No DHSS

£475 PCM

Bloxwich
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Motoring

Compiled by Motoring Editor Sharon Walters

Two new super models from SEAT

TO prove that SEAT really is in touch with what its customers want, the company has introduced the Mii and Ibiza Toca editions. And for the new reg customers can get a great deal.

Toca is the Spanish word for 'touch', giving a fairly obvious clue as to the particular bonus that buyers get when choosing one of these new models.

Yes, it's a touch screen. Specifically, Toca models come with the very useful SEAT Portable System, first introduced to the SEAT range with the Mii city car.

The Mii Toca, like the Ibiza, comes loaded with equipment including air con

The Mii Toca is based on the 1.0 60 PS SE version, and adds the SEAT Portable System and rear parking sensors – both especially useful in the car's natural environment, the busy city streets.

At full retail price, the additional outlay for the Mii Toca edition over the SE is a modest £475 – great value when these options individually would require an £805 spend.

In the Ibiza Toca, buyers get a set of 16-inch 'Stratos' alloy wheels (up from 15 inches) along with the SEAT Portable System, for a £425 premium over the SE car on which it's based.

The Toca editions are available to order now, with first cars expected to hit the road during early February – and customers buying either the Mii or Ibiza Toca before April will enjoy huge discounts.

That's because until the end of March 2013 the Mii Toca is reduced by £850, putting the three-door model at an attractive £8,995, while the Ibiza Toca editions all receive a £2,705 cut, leaving the three-door (SC) model with an outstanding £9,995 price.

Air conditioning

Every Toca edition is loaded with equipment, including air conditioning, a leather steering wheel and gear knob, heated and electrically adjustable door mirrors, electric front windows, electronic stability control (ESC), central locking, and front fog lights with cornering function (Ibiza Toca only).

The SEAT Portable System packs a deluge of digital driver aids into a lightweight package not much bigger than a cassette box. It includes satellite navigation, Bluetooth phone connectivity with audio streaming, a MicroSD card slot for music storage, and trip computer functions, all controlled via a foolproof interface on a five-inch touchscreen.

"The Ibiza Toca is another example of SEAT giving great value to buyers by providing cutting-edge equipment at a very reasonable price," said Simon Bradley, product manager at SEAT UK.

"The SE specification is very popular among current Ibiza owners, which is no surprise given the amount of comfort, safety and convenience equipment it has as standard. But we really want as many as possible to have access to the remarkable SEAT Portable System. By bringing big car technology to the city car and supermini classes, the device really has moved the game forward," he added.

The new three-door SEAT Ibiza Toca, complete with 16-inch 'Stratos' wheels

The SEAT Portable System is, from this month, available as an optional extra on all Ibiza models, superseding the TomTom unit previously available. The system is capable of having additional functionality added by way of software upgrades, and will shortly be updated to include internet search functionality. Existing SEAT Portable System owners will be able to access these additional features.

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Mercedes-Benz E-Class sees an improved equipment specification for a modest increase in price

Mercedes E-Class range will benefit from more equipment

THE new Mercedes E-Class will have much more equipment via a revised model line and only modest price increases, the firm has confirmed.

SE, Avantgarde and Sport are to be replaced with a simpler two-model range consisting of SE and AMG Sport. Both will have more standard equipment than the SE and Sport models they replace.

SE cars will have larger alloy wheels, a new grille bearing the relocated three-pointed star, partial LED headlights, DAB radio, COMAND Online, Active Park Assist with Parktronic, Collision Prevention Assist, twin exhaust pipes and more, totalling more than £4,000 of extras for a cost increase of £2,280.

AMG Sport models feature a price hike of £575 over the equivalent outgoing Sport, but feature almost £3,000 worth of additional equipment, according to Mercedes.

It gets upgraded alloys of the same 18 inches as before, the new grille, revised upholstery, COMAND Online, DAB radio and Collision Prevention Assist.

Three diesels will be available across both models, including the E 220 CDI, 250 CDI and 300 BlueTec Hybrid, while the AMG Sport can also be fitted with an E 350 BlueTec. Two petrol engines, the E 200 and 250 are there as well, albeit the E 200 is for the saloon only.

Prices will start from £32,400 for the manual E 220 CDI SE saloon and from £33,980 for the automatic-only E 200 SE saloon.

The mainstream part of the range tops out at £43,815 for the E 300 BlueTec Hybrid AMG Sport Estate, with the cheapest AMG variant priced at £73,720.

Deliveries are to start in April, one month after the '13' number plate is introduced.

Suzuki Swift SZ-L, with its 1.2-litre Dual-VVT engine, sits between the Sport and SZ3 models

Popular Suzuki Swift range gets luxurious new addition

SUZUKI has added a luxurious but affordable new model to the Swift range, to sit between the Sport and the SZ3.

Adding features from the Swift Sport to the existing SZ3 spec, such as a boot spoiler and red stitching on the steering wheel and gear knob, the Swift SZ-L is aimed at buyers who want the looks but don't need the highly tuned 1.6-litre engine from the Sport.

The SZ-L also adds unique 16in alloy wheels, rear privacy glass, cruise control and free metallic paint in a choice of four colours.

It uses only the surprisingly powerful 1.2-litre Dual-VVT petrol engine, which produces 93bhp combined with CO2 emissions of 116g/km.

At present that means free road tax for the first year and then a £30 fee after that. Fuel economy is up to 56.5mpg.

The model is rated in a relatively low insurance group so should be accessible to the young target audience, especially when combined with Suzuki's current 'VAT-free' offer which sees a 20 per cent reduction in the purchase price.

The new model is on sale now, but only qualifies for the 20 per cent discount until the end of March.

Models shown: ix20 Active 1.6 auto in Ice Blue metallic paint with nil advance payment. ix35 Style 1.6 GDi in Sleek Silver metallic paint with £499 advance payment. To qualify for the Motability offer you must be in receipt of the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance or War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement. Offers are subject to acceptance of Motability application. The Motability Contract Hire Scheme is administered by Motability Operations Limited (Registered Company No. 1373876), City Gate House, 22 Southwark Bridge Road, London, SE1 9HB. Full written details, including terms and conditions, of the Motability Scheme are available on request from Motability. Please note 60,000 miles over 3 years are allowed on the Motability Contract Hire Scheme.

Fuel consumption in MPG (l/100km) for Hyundai ix20 Active 1.6 Auto: Urban 34.0 (8.3), Extra Urban 51.4 (5.5), Combined 43.6 (6.5), CO_2 Emissions 154 g/km. Fuel consumption in MPG (l/100km) for Hyundai ix35 Style 1.6 GDi: Urban 34.4 (8.2), Extra Urban 47.1 (6.0), Combined 41.5 (6.8), CO_2 Emissions 158 g/km.

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Motoring

Drivers, would you pass the test again?

HALF of all drivers would struggle with at least one part of the driving test if they had to resit it, according to an poll.

Parallel parking would be the hardest thing to get right, with women (32 per cent) twice as likely as men (16 per cent) to admit it.

Men (nine per cent) were nearly twice as likely as women (5 per cent) to say driving at an appropriate speed would be their downfall, says the AA/Populus poll.

Londoners (16 per cent) were the least likely to say parallel parking would b what they would find hardest to do to test standard, perhaps because they have to practise it more.

Drivers from eastern England (25 per cent), Yorkshire and Humberside (25 per cent) and East Midlands (24 per cent) were the most likely to choose parallel parking.

Hesitant

London drivers lived up to their aggressive reputation, with almost one in 20 saying that keeping a safe distance would be the hardest thing to do.

One in 20 of Welsh drivers thought they would struggle with reversing around a corner.

But, drivers from the West Midlands and Scotland were more likely to be hesitant about this , with nine per cent saying they would find it hard.

Use of mirrors highlighted a big difference among age groups with 12 per cent of 18 to 24-year-olds saying it is the thing they would find hardest to do correctly in a re-test, compared to just one per cent of over-65s.

Other research showed that one in 10 UK driving licence holders think they think they are 'quite' or 'very' unlikely to pass a re-test at all.

AA president Edmund King said: "It is alarming to think so many drivers out there think there is at least one aspect of driving that they would struggle to do to the standard required to pass a driving test. "Being able to manoeuvre correctly, making proper observations and keeping a safe distance and speed are all very important parts of driving safely."

He added: "Driving is a skill for life and, although it is easy to let bad habits form after your test, drivers should make sure their skills are kept polished."

Qualified drivers with serious problems have been tackled by an expert team of AA Driving School instructors in the second series of Channel 5's, Dangerous Drivers' School and to mark it, the AA Charitable Trust has 2,000 free courses, like the ones taken on the show, available for nervous, lapsed or dangerous drivers.

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Don't look back . . . nine per cent of drivers in the West Midlands say they would struggle with having to reverse around a corner

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Supermini from Audi really is a class act

The A1 Sportback, a premium supermini, and like all Audis it is high quality

The comfortable, attractive and spacious interior of the Audi A1 Sportback

By Matt Joy

IT'S been just as hard as I had imagined. On the day the A1 was due to go back I treated it to its most expensive clean yet, a positively decadent £35 mini-valet.

As I watched the layers of grime being removed and the brilliant white shine coming through, I knew I was going to miss it – and they say modern cars are lacking in character or personality.

I don't believe a word of it.

In less than six months the A1 covered almost 13,000 miles with me at the wheel, more than the average car covers in a whole year.

That's indicative of the hard life it led – it was never abused, of course, but it had to get on with the job, and most of the miles tended to be long distance motorway hacks or cross-country dashes rather than a quick trundle to the shops.

But that is the mark of the modern supermini, particularly a premium one like the A1.

Now we want our small hatches to be capable of everything, especially when we're forking out the best part of £20,000 for one. But they have risen to the challenge, and despite its size the A1 proved to be as capable as something much larger and more expensive.

For starters, the A1 still has all the small-car nippiness that makes it the ideal tool for getting around the city; especially so in S tronic form, where the opportunity to let your left leg relax is priceless.

The 1.4-litre turbocharged engine has a nice band of instant torque low down so you can get ahead off the lights, and conversely the stop/start helps you save fuel when you're going nowhere.

If you have a sensitive behind you might want an SE version over the Sport which has slightly stiffer suspension, but it's merely more communicative of road imperfections rather than being disturbed by them.

Cruising

Get out of town and the long seventh gear gives fuss-free cruising, and chance to enjoy the cabin.

So well made and attractive is the interior of the A1 that I genuinely couldn't have wished for anything more – bar cruise control and heated seats, which I could have easily got off the options list if I'd thought more carefully about it.

The MMI infotainment system worked extremely well, with its clear display, easy main controller and shortcut buttons. Within days I was navigating my way around it without even having to look.

The sat-nav worked flawlessly and the option of three routes and an ability to recalculate quickly if I chose to ignore it was always welcome.

The audio system was loud and clear and made browsing through the tracks on a well-known brand of phone and MP3 player a piece of cake.

Space-wise the A1 never came up short even when it was asked to carry more than was realistic.

Try two small children in car seats, two single duvets, two pillows, a large suitcase, a bed guard (essentially an awkwardly-shaped unfoldable contraption the size of a parcel shelf) and two big squishy bags.

Perhaps most importantly the A1 always delivered a healthy slice of the feel-good factor, which is arguably the main reason you'd choose one over a cheaper non-premium rival.

Say what you like about the Audi brand but you know what you're going to get: a high quality, desirable product that feels like a choice rather than a compromise.

The other side of that is also that the A1 will remain desirable even when it comes to sell-up ti a packet to run, and the service you get at the dealers is the same as if you roll up in an R8 – and Audi dealers tend to be some of the plushest and most comfortable in the business.

The A1 is not only a useful and fuss-free supermini, it's also a proper Audi through and through. That you can get one without selling several major organs is reason enough.

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LIZ 42, black, divorced, seeking male, 44-54 for kind, sincere, honest, open relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400949**

JANINE petite cute female who loves meals in/out, romantic strolls, WLTM interesting appreciative, independent man for ltr. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400803**

JULIE 30's female looking for some much needed tlc with similar laidback male. Likes nights in/out, socialising, romance etc, call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400487**

62YR old female, widowed, small, slim, attractive, kind, outgoing, likes meals out, dancing, holidays, nights in, seeking professional gent. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 394106**

KATHY 38yrs, knows what she wants out of life, wltm similar genuine male to wine/dine enjoy travel, share ambitions and hopefully fall in love with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400793**

GAIL 52, blonde hair, 5ft 2ins, likes nights out, seeks N/S male, 50-60 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 402041**

MONICA 35, very attractive, gorgeous curvy figure, WLTM nice male who wants to get to know a genuine black beauty to wine, dine, romance hopefully leading to more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401837**

JULIE cute blonde blue eyed flirty female 31, looking for laidback dates and fun times with older confident male, 40-65yrs with GSOH. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401833**

JO attractive 30's brunette who loves life, WLTM up for it male to enjoy nights in/out, weekends away, adult fun times and hopefully more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401591**

TRACY slim blue eyed blonde, likes nights out, travel, commitment phobic, looking for understanding professional male for mutually convenient meets. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401579**

CLARE 38, single mum, curvy hour glass, loves to be tactile, OHAC, WLTM caring male for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399047**

SARA young fun and sick of being single, trendy, well presented, very attractive, loves good food/wine, keeping fit, fast cars, looking to fall in love. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401543**

I'M Carol 39, slim, blonde with legs 11, passionate by nature, loves tlc and looking for similar solvent male for fun times and more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401467**

CHANTELLE 40yr old slim sensual confident female who loves to party, seeking older male for fun dates without complications. Any age/race. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400465**

JACKIE lonely discreet 30's female with many interests, WLTM kind professional male to share nice times with. Status/age/looking unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400451**

LADY widow, 58, slim, brown hair, blue eyes, seeks smart, intelligent, easygoing man with GSOH who enjoys conversations, days out, short breaks, meals out. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 387247**

GRACE Jones lookalike, black lady, 53, 5ft 11ins, OHAC, WLTM male, 45-65, 6ft plus for relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397681**

CAROL 37 attractive slim blonde, curves in all the right places, nice personality, good company, looking for caring fun man for fun times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400263**

CLARE 37 attractive slim with long dark hair and big brown eyes, WLTM genuine male who is honest, sincere and won't waste my time or break my heart. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400199**

TRACY 26, pretty petite brunette, possibly looking for LTR but definitely looking for fun times with outgoing guy. Any age/looks. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397027**

PAULA 37, WLTM male companion for meals out, social drinking, weekends away, hopefully leading to a meaningful friendship with benefits! Any age. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 398503**

MICHELLE 39yr old nurse, slim, petite, blonde, blue eyes, looking to enjoy life with similar romantic, caring guy. Single dad welcome. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 398349**

HI I'm Sharon an outgoing single mum looking to find love so thought I would give this a go, please don't make me regret it, someone call me pls. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399197**

NATASHA single professional 39yr old brunette looking for fun and friendship with genuine guy, 30-50yrs. Status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 395719**

TRISH tall slim young/good looking GSOH, professional, solvent, OHAC, affectionate and loves tlc, WLTM male who also likes to be in a loving relationship, 39-50yrs. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397579**

CARING lady, 52, brown hair/eyes, seeks male, 30-60 for socialising, meals out, cinema, music, sports and having a laugh. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 392883**

LOVING caring young 68yr old female, 5ft 2ins, slim-medium build, size 12, smoker, seeks slim, well-dressed guy with GSOH for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399923**

ANGELA green eyed dark haired feminine lady who enjoys walking and keeping fit, seeking lonely kind gentleman for good times and more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399633**

LISA attractive blue eyed brunette, sporty, well-maintained 25yr old uni student looking for older male for discreet dates. Status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399619**

DEBS lonely 40's female with no ties, GSOH, N/S, loves the simple things in life looking for similar soul mate to be happy together with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399523**

CAROLINE attractive, kind, caring, 43, seeking kind, caring male for LTR, 45-50. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 396837**

CARLA 41, brown hair/eyes, 5ft 2ins, loving, seeking male who likes walks, cinema and romantic meals. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 396127**

SHARON slim blonde blue eyed outgoing 30's female looking for uncomplicated meets and adult companionship, like what you hear? Call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400119**

I'M Heather I love to cook, eat in/out, share a nice flirty glass of large wine or two with good company and am eager to hear from you. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399715**

NICKY lonely 39yr old single mum looking for adult companionship and strictly no strings fun. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399189**

DEBBIE sexy size 14, fun, outgoing, discreet, looking for fun times only with male over 40yrs, call to find out more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 398759**

HI I'm Marilyn a blue-eyed beauty. Call me if you have a happy outlook and are seeking some fun. Age/looks unimportant. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 395665**

SUE confident professional, sporty/active, seeking sensitive interesting guy for intimate evenings in with great food and conversations. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397485**

MARIA French female looking for mutually convenient companionship, very friendly, very discreet and very interested in meeting with you! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397451**

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KARL 28, black hair, brown eyes, smart, 5ft 3ins, seeking female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400953**

PAUL 52, looking for friendship, possible relationship with someone who can make me happy in 2013. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400849**

MALE 60, 5ft 10ins, loving, caring, seeking genuine female, any age, 40-60 for relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400513**

MALE seeking blonde female, 55-60 for discreet adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400435**

COLIN 62, divorced, many interests, GSOH, seeking slim, attractive, 50's female for companionship, maybe LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400389**

MALE 58, good looking, placid, seeks honest, loyal, caring female with view to becoming soul mates. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400313**

STEVE single dad, slim, 45, looking for girl who wants fun times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400257**

COLIN 62, divorced, many interests, GSOH, seeking slim, attractive, 50's female for companionship, maybe LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400389**

GARY 46, loyal, genuine, GSOH, down to earth, seeking attractive lady for relationship. South Shrops/North Herefordshire. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400237**

STEVE 49, fed up, seeking female for fun and friendship, possible LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 393218**

57YR old male, good looking, seeking female for fun times and nights in. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397463**

GARY 39, seeks female, 30-50 for LTR and fun. Single mum welcome. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 398747**

FRIENDLY guy 49, tall, fit, GSOH, attractive, seeks lady for discreet fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399091**

ROY 62, tall, fit, loyal, N/S, looking for that special lady. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397637**

TAYLOR 50, tall, athletic, GSOH, WLTM female, attractive, curvy for friendship, maybe more, food, communication, evenings out, travel. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399067**

STEVE 54, attractive, seeks older lady, 55-75 for mutual adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399755**

CARL 40, likes DVDs, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 393766**

MALE 70's, honest, caring, attractive, likes socialising, seeks smart, attractive, caring lady for meetings. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397975**

BRIAN 60's, intelligent, many interests, loving, affectionate, WLTM West Mids lady for sharing occasional meetings/weekends. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400115**

52YR old single parent, 5ft 11ins, slim, likes most things, walks, nights out, cinema, animals, seeks caring, honest, trustworthy female. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400039**

BRIAN 73, fit, N/S, own home, likes walks, cycling, meals out, nights in, holidays, travel, seeks genuine, caring female. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399667**

GUY early 60's, fit, N/S, OHAC, seeks slim female, 30-60 for fun, adult times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399567**

LOOKING for love. Telford male, 46, shaved head, average build, likes walks, meals out, seeks female. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397941**

DAVID slightly disabled, likes sports, meals out, nights in, seeks female for fun, friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 393192**

MALE fun, outgoing, easy-going, seeking female for good times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 393346**

55YR old male, likes sports, film, nights in, seeking female, 30-45 for fun times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 398049**

GENT 54, slightly mad but not bad will make you glad you answered this ad. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 398231**

STEVEN 49, good looking, likes a laugh, pubs, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397985**

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STEVE 54 bi, non-scene, seeking guy of similar age or older for fun and friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401465**

OLDER male, outgoing, sporty, seeking younger man for fun and friendship, slim-medium build, active, hairy. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401225**

CD 70 plus seeking CD 70 plus for friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 393208**

MALE 34, attractive, 5ft 10ins, blue eyes, blond hair, seeks slim male for fun relationship. Any area, can travel. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 311892**

GAY male, 34, slim, toned, seeking older guy for fun, friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 395735**

MALE 44, seeking male, 18-23 for fun relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 391626**

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Point is made on a potato patch pitch

Walsall 1 Notts C 1

A HORRIBLE game was played on a a potato patch pitch ravaged by the weather, ***writes Nick Mashiter.***

Both teams battled for a hard-earned result which did neither side's play-off hopes any favours.

The point, though, did emphasise how far the squad has come in a short space of time. No-one would argue it was a fair result but two months ago it would have been a game Walsall would have lost.

Under second-half pressure, conceding an equaliser to Yoann Arquin, and letting Alan Judge squander County's other best chances, the Saddlers could have crumbled. But they didn't. The dressing room was content, if not delirious, with a point which edged them closer to that 50-point target.

The grit and determination not to be beaten shows how far the Saddlers have come since ending that 16-game barren run.

They were not able to capitalise on Will Grigg's penalty opener-after the previous 10 games yielded eight wins – including beating leaders Bournemouth and promotion hopefuls Doncaster.

Should they fail to reach the top six – an optimistic target – they will be better next season. Keep the squad together – as the club have been trying to do – and there may be a chance. Hanging on to Jamie Paterson would give further hope.

The 21-year-old battled on the sodden surface but his undoubted quality shone through as County struggled to contain him.

Tricks and flicks were coupled with an exceptional workrate – highlighted in a dash the length of the pitch to halt a Magpies break – from a corner he had taken.

From his ingenuity Walsall carved the first chance as his pass found Grigg to round Bartosz Bialkowski, only for Judge to hack off the line after six minutes.

A scrappy impasse remained until the 28th minute when Sam Mantom won the ball in midfield and launched a pass over the top to Paterson who was clattered in the area by the sprawling Bialkowski.

Grigg sent the keeper the wrong way from the spot – after a delay as a flare landed on the pitch.

County caretaker boss Chris Kiwomya – who once scored four goals for Ipswich against Walsall – flung on the cavalry in Arquin at half-time and the game changed.

The substitute was denied by Ian McLoughlin on 55 minutes after he seized on James Chambers' awful back-pass.

Judge shot over as Saddlers failed to clear Alan Sheehan's free-kick but they levelled on 66 minutes as Arquin poked in Jamal Campbell-Ryce's centre.

Saddlers responded and Craig Westcarr – who earlier saw a shot blocked – should have earned a penalty as he was sent tumbling.

County could have snatched it in injury time as Arquin headed wide from two yards.

Andy is so close with kick which hits post

TABLE-TOPPING Luctonians were relieved to get a point as a kick which would have won the game rebounded off their upright.

Walsall United's gripping rugby union encounter with Luctonians seconds,top of the Reserves League, went to the wire in a 13-13 draw.

Fly-half Andy Hawkins converted United's only try and kicked two penalties but saw a testing kick to win the game rebound off the upright!

First-team regular Rod Dickson had returned to action for Walsall and scored the team's only try.

The third XV had an impressive 41-24 win over Aston Old Edwardians seconds with young winger Connor Pitt the star as he raced over for four tries.

Simon Bickley, Andy Richardson and Calvin Hopkinson scored one try apiece. Kevin Pitt, father of Connor, kicked three conversions.

Walsall Colts beat Derbyshire side Melbourne Colts 34-3 to reach the divisional semi-final of the National Plate.

They scored five tries, with centre Rhys Barry and winger Mark Duckett both grabbing two each and scrum-half Jordan Sproule darting over for the first score.

Robert Angell kicked a penalty and three conversions. They now travel to face Moseley on Saturday afternoon.

The under-13s beat Burton 45-0 with three tries for Jamie Harding and two from Henri Lavin, the latter also landing five conversions.

There were also tries for Alex Fletcher and Nico Watkins.

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Lichfield Challenge Cup Round 1: Prince of Wales 5 Hussey Arms 1.

H Boston Cup Round 2: Bowman 3 Lichfield Social B 1; Cellar Door 6 Shelfield 4.

Record breaker is so disappointed at end

Jimmy Walker tells of his sadness at leaving Walsall. Nick Mashiter reports

"THE best thing which ever happened to me was I came for a cross in the first minute at Scarborough thinking I was the big 'I am' and I got absolutely butchered," says Jimmy Walker. "That brought me down to earth."

He was still establishing himself at Walsall as they closed in on promotion with a 2-1 win at Scarborough in 1995.

He leaves with a record 534 appearances etching him into the Saddlers' history.

The 39-year-old failed to marry coaching with playing and left by mutual consent.

A calf injury hampered his coaching and meant he didn't to play a game this season.

He admits it is a sad end to a Saddlers career that saw three promotions and, after he returned in 2010, the Great Escape.

"I'm disappointed to finish like this and I wouldn't have wanted to," said Walker.

Mad

"The hardest thing is, when you've affected somewhere so positively for such a long time, to actually be there and not contribute. I was watching games and not being involved and it was driving me mad.

"I was grumpy because of it. I had to drive up from Essex which I didn't mind, I'd been doing it for almost three years.

"But I'd be late a few times, moaning because I'd been stuck in traffic and not giving the best I could give.

"In the end I was thinking 'I don't want it to end this way' but I probably couldn't change it that quickly for the season so maybe it was the right time.

"Fortunately all the good things outweigh the disappointment I have of leaving."

Jimmy Walker, centre, leads celebrations after promotion in the 1998-99 season

Walker earlier this season in the colours of Walsall

Walker with his framed shirt from The Walsall Supporters Club after breaking the Saddlers' appearance record

Walker has not officially retired but concedes it will come in summer after a 570-game career taking him from Notts County to Walsall and onto West Ham, Tottenham and back to the Saddlers.

Injury in the 2005 Championship play-off final and eventual replacements saw him make just 20 appearances for the Hammers – picking up an FA Cup losers medal in 2006 as an unused substitute.

A 2009 switch to Spurs as back-up to Heurelho Gomes and Carlo Cudicini saw Rafael van der Vaart nickname him the 'King' after impressive training sessions.

He rejected coaching under Harry Redknapp to return to Walsall a year later and help save them from the drop in 2011 after Dean Smith succeeded Chris Hutchings.

Breaking the club's appearance record in a 0-0 draw at Brentford last season kept him going. "That made staying worthwhile," said Walker, who lists Walsall's 1999 promotion to Division One as his best. "When you play you never have a big thing for records but now I think 'what a great achievement'. The club has been a huge part of my life.

"My biggest regret in football is leaving when we went down in 2004 but I knew the way it was going to go.

"We should have been in the Championship for years to come but we missed a trick. Now I hope they get to the play-offs and get to Wembley – that'll be another massive regret, though, because I've never played there.

"We missed out a couple of times in the Auto Windscreens Shield. Wayne Evans scored an own goal at Bournemouth in the semi-final in 1998 and we lost. Pete Waterman was going to give us a cup final record and I was going to be lead singer. We were going to do a team song and on the B side I was going to sing Suspicious Minds solo. I couldn't talk Pete into it after we were knocked out."

His last Walsall appearance came in the final day 1-0 win at MK Dons last season, leaving no chance to say a proper goodbye.

He will have more time for sons Thomas, 13, and 16-month-old Ethan and the chance to focus on his coaching badges.

Walker, 40 in July, knows he cannot go on forever. He is ready for the next chapter.

"I've done it for 23 years and you're spoilt rotten. All you've got to do is be on time – which I failed miserably at," he jokes.

"Now it's strange. You wake up in the morning and think 'I've got to get to training…no, hang on I don't.' It's exciting times.

"If something comes up with the coaching I'll have a look at it, but at the moment I'm happy to sit back and reflect.

"The fat boy from Mansfield did all right."

Aldridge dig in for comeback match win

Aldridge 24 Warley 19

RARELY has the cliche "a game of two halves" been more appropriate.

Aldridge were dominated by the visitors' pack in the first half.

But they conjured up a superb second-half revival to take victory in this Midlands Five West (North) rugby encounter.

Aldridge sparkled briefly at the start but from then on the Warley forwards took charge of the scrums and line-outs, easily winning their ball and much of the home side's too.

Three tries, one apiece for flanker Sam Taylor, prop Terry Conner and centre Richard Hopkins – the first and third converted by fly-half Marcus Taylor – put Warley 19-0 ahead.

That completed the visitors' scoring. Aldridge, although still under siege, put up a strong defence. A rare outing to the Warley try line produced a penalty which hooker Nick Kniveton had quickly tapped and touched down while the decision was still being debated. Scrum-half Chris Jones converted.

In the second half, some reconfiguration within the Aldridge pack improved the possession situation giving their backs more opportunities to run.

A break by fly-half Kenny Carter brought a penalty which Jones kicked.

Carter then crashed through to touch down midway out. Jones again added the extras to cut the gap to two points.

With 10 minutes left and play on the halfway line, flanker Chris Balmforth wrested possession and fed Jones whose sleight-of-hand launched full-back Alex Yates clear just inches inside the touchline. He easily outpaced the cover to score. Jones again obliged.

Gallant attempt to stop victory

Rushall Olympic U11 6
Beechdale Juniors U11 1

GALLANT Beechdale opposition could not prevent a big Rushall win.

Reece Nunne and Tom Day put Rushall two up at half-time and Jack Kemp's second-half hat-trick ensured a Walsall Junior Youth League win.

Lucas Fallon also found the net while Beechdale did net a consolation when four down.

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SPORT

Bye, Wacca
Saddlers legend says farewell
Page 51

Try that
Aldridge battle back to take the victory
Page 51

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Dave Merlin leads the charge for Walsall

Quality is displayed to secure home win

Walsall 44 Ludlow 22

WALSALL maintained their good form with quality rugby in a fairly comfortable Midlands One West victory.

After two minutes. Max Hughes won a lineout ball and Daniel Simpson made a strong drive before giving room for winger Paul Naylor to dive over near the corner.

Another forward drive saw Matt Wood deliver a pass to send full-back Chris Mould over. Wood put over the conversion, but Will Sparrow gave Ludlow points with a penalty.

Wood then intercepted a pass and ran 40 metres to score and convert and three minutes made it 22-3 after putting over a 30m penalty.

Ludlow centre Williams charged down a kick and dived over, Sparrow adding the two points.

Walsall front row colleague Russ Gauden crashed over for 27-10 at half-time.

Converted

Daniel Simpson, Dave Merlin and Chris Mould all made defence splitting runs with a Merlin run and lineout catch setting up hooker Clarke after a series of short drives.

Ludlow fly half Lines dummied a pass and winger Sparrow got the try, which he converted. Sparrow was over again four minutes later after a quick penalty.

The hosts' Clarke carried well and a couple of quick passes released winger Alex Greenslade on a thirty meter try scoring run. Wood produced his best kick with a touchline conversion.

A final play from a midfield scrum saw Wood pass for Roger Weston to race clear for a forty five meter touchdown to bring the game to a satisfactory end.

This Saturday relegation-threatened Northwich visit Delves Road.

Dean's winning ways are rewarded

Walsall FC

DEAN SMITH has become the first Walsall boss to be named Manager of the Month in almost seven years.

The Banks's Stadium chief claimed the League One gong as four wins from five games in January pushed Saddlers to ninth place.

He beat Swindon's, now former manager, Paolo Di Canio and Yeovil chief Gary Johnson to the award to be first Walsall manager to win since Richard Money in November, 2006.

"It's been a while and hopefully if we continue the form we're in at the moment we might get this month's as well," he said.

"It's my first personal achievement as a manager and I class staying up in my first year as a massive achievement but this is the first time I've been recognised for something.

"We've had a performance of the week when we beat Hartlepool 5-2 but to get manager of the month is a fantastic accolade and I'm really proud of that."

Walsall beat Stevenage, Portsmouth, Preston and Bournemouth in a superb start to 2013 with their only defeat coming in a 2-0 reverse at Colchester.

The award caps a stunning turnaround after the Saddlers went 16 games without a win between September and December. Including the 1-0 win over Colchester on December 22, Walsall had won eight of their last 10 games before the award.

They went on to host managerless Notts County on Saturday and Smith dodged the customary "curse of the award" defeat as the Saddlers drew 1-1.

Ex-Villa midfielder Alan Curbishley, who is on the selection panel, hailed Smith. He said: "It's been a great month for Walsall with a very good run of results, including an emphatic win against Bournemouth.

"Dean Smith has successfully guided his side to the top half of League One and are now potentially eyeing-up a play-off spot."

Commercial director Roy Whalley, left, hands the award to Dean Smith

BILL SAYS WEMBLEY DREAM CONTINUES

SECRETARY Bill Shaw today refused to write off Walsall Wood's FA Vase chances as the record-breaking side chase Wembley glory.

by Nick Mashiter

They go to Runcorn in the fifth round on Saturday after a thrilling 3-2 win at Hanworth Villa at the weekend.

It is the furthest the Midlands Combination Premier Division club have been in the competition and they are just four games from Wembley. Runcorn are top of the North West Counties Premier Division – but Shaw insists Wood can continue the dream.

He said: "I wouldn't bet against us. When you get to this stage of the cup it's not the size of the dog in the fight but the size of the fight in the dog.

"A terrier can beat an Alsatian on its day.

"We're not frightened of anyone – look at what Luton did in the FA Cup and they have proved it's possible.

"It's all a little bit of a shock. Mark (Swann, manager) has turned the club around and it's a great story.

Great

"We were down and out last season, but it's a new committee which has taken over in the last couple of years and for this to happen is great.

"We're two games and a two-legged semi-final away from Wembley.

"It's every footballer's dream to play at Wembley, even the ones on £100,000 a week – and now little old Walsall Wood have got a chance to go.

"We're four games away from Wembley and you couldn't wish for anything better, we couldn't have imagined it in our wildest dreams.

"Hopefully it will carry on. We're confident and we beat Wigan Robin Park who are 12th in Runcorn's league," he added.

"But Runcorn are different and they are top so it'll be a difficult game."

Jamie Hawkins' hat-trick sent them through against Hanworth after they blew a 2-0 lead.

Wood won 3-2 after Hawkins completed his treble with an 83rd-minute penalty after Hanworth had pulled it back to 2-2.

It was a triumph in adversity for Wood, who had been due to stage the tie against Hanworth but had to travel to their rivals' ground in Hounslow, London after bad weather forced three successive postponements and the loss of home advantage.

"It was quite emotional on Saturday," added Shaw.

"We were revitalised after they scored the second – rather than them. We started to play better again after they equalised.

"We got knocked out by Elsmere Rangers last year and they sent us a good luck message on the way to the game last week.

"It's like everyone is saying 'hang on, this is Walsall Wood and they're good guys, good luck'.

"It's special but it's not over yet. We can still dream, it's still there."

Pics go nap to defy manager award hoodoo

Neil Kitching receives his Evo-Stik award

Ahmed Obeng beats Blyth keeper Craig Pickering to net for the Pics

Rushall Olympic 5 Blyth Spartans 2

THERE was no Manager of the Month hoodoo for Neil Kitching as the Pics boss collected the Evo-Stik Northern Premier award for January.

Rushall continued their form of the first month of the year into February – being devastating in front of goal lately.

They gave a Blyth Spartans, without a win in their last three matches, a football lesson at Dales Lane.

In-form Dave Walker tapped home from close range on 12 minutes but Blyth levelled four minutes later through Daniel Maguire. Shaun Utterson's right-wing cross was met by an amazing diving header which left Pics' keeper Chris Gemmell with no chance.

Blyth had chances to take the lead as Craig Hubbard and Andrew Jennings had headers but Pics had decent chances for Josh Craddock and Sam Smith before they regained the lead five minutes before the break.

Andre Landell's pass put in Ahmed Obeng. Keeper Craig Pickering rushed to smother but Obeng slid home from close range. Jon Haynes extended Pics' lead on the stroke of half-time with a 25-yard free-kick.

Two minutes after the restart a free-kick from Kyle Haynes from 25 yards was headed in at the near post by Walker for his second and a 4-1 lead.

It was Blyth's turn to attack as the game went from end-to-end and they gained their reward from the penalty spot on 54 minutes. Gemmell was deemed to have brought down Maguire and Hubbard scored from the spot. The keeper received a yellow card.

Rushall pushed forward and managed to grab another goal before the end through Obeng's second.

Blyth did have time for one more chance after James Baxter's header was cleared off the line by Mitchell Tolley but Rushall held out.

Rushall Olympic: Gemmell, K Haynes, J Haynes, Tolley, Caines (Daniel 10), Smith, Palmer, Craddock, Walker (Islam 77), Obeng, Landell (Edmunds 83). **Subs not used:** Bridgwater, Thompson.

Blyth Spartans: Pickering, Utterson, Airey, Hubbard, Buchanan, Slaughter (Bert 75), Mason (Donnelly 55), Hooks, Jennings (Baxter 64), Maguire, Dale. **Sub not used:** Hendrick.

Lockmen too late to stop Flyers

Willenhall Town 1 Lye Town 3

TABLE-TOPPING Lye took the points as Willenhall only got into the match once they were 3-0 down.

Lye had the best of the first half of the West Midlands Premier clash, Steve Weaver firing at keeper Matt Rogers before heading high over on 18 minutes.

Three minutes later the Flyers led as Rogers did well to save after a deflection nearly fooled him. Richard Anslow netted the loose ball.

It should have been 2-0 early in the second half as Tom Rann was robbed of possession but Callum Haynes made a timely tackle as Weaver shaped to shoot.

Two quick-fire goals killed the game. On 63 minutes a ball through the middle saw Kalum Evitts run through to net comfortably.

Three minutes later the defence seemed a little slow getting to Anslow out wide on the right of the box and he bent a superb effort around Rogers and in off the far post from a tight angle.

The Lockmen finally awoke from their slumbers as Jake Morgan was denied as he burst through the middle before he headed home from a 76th-minute corner.

Star's dismal day as Dale dominate

Tividale 5 Continental Star 1

STERLING work by groundsman Ted Wood and his volunteers got this Midland Alliance game played.

But Continental Star may have preferred Wood to surrender to the elements after losing 5-1. Davion Hamilton put them ahead after 16 minutes, but that was as good as it got for Star.

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